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## **GUIDELINES**

FOR THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE  
OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
IN THE ARTS SECTOR



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## FOREWORD

*Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People in the Arts Sector* is the outcome of a two-year process. In 2004, seventy-six arts organisations took part in two-day training modules, organised by the Arts Council and facilitated by Health Service Executive personnel, informing the overall approach and design of Child Protection Guidelines for use within the arts sector. In 2005, a Working Party was established with representatives of arts organisations, the Council of National Cultural Institutions, the Health Service Executive and the Arts Council. Drawing on the outcomes of the 2004 sessions this group has worked meticulously to structure, pilot and present an accessible and relevant framework for use within the arts community, in line with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.

*Partnership for the Arts* says "our goals and actions can be achieved only if the Arts Council, the arts community and other interested agencies work together". These guidelines represent such a commitment. They also will enable us to create better opportunities for children and young people to participate, create, and respond critically to the arts through recognising the importance of taking every reasonable step to ensure that the welfare and protection of young people is planned for and maintained. These guidelines will assist arts organisations in devising their own policies and procedures that meet national requirements and support all involved.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this publication, in particular, the members of the Working Party for giving of their time and expertise so generously. The guidelines will be made widely available. We will continue to work with the arts community, the Council for National Cultural Institutions and the Health Service Executive on implementation, and we will be reviewing and updating the guidelines as necessary.

Mary Cloake  
Director

## INTRODUCTION

The Arts Council together with members of the arts community, the Council of National Cultural Institutions and facilitated by the Health Service Executive, has produced this document to assist arts organisations in the development of their own individual child protection and welfare policies and procedures.

The guidelines have been devised with the arts sector in mind and are a guide to good practice. They privilege a child-centred approach where the developmental needs of the child/young person are to the fore. They are not comprehensive but aim to provide a practical framework to be adapted by organisations to suit their own unique circumstances and practices. All arts organisations and individuals working with children and young people have a responsibility to protect children in accordance with government guidelines. A background to legislation and legal obligations relevant to child protection can be found in the government guidelines, *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (pp. 25-27).

Some arts organisations have already developed their policies or are currently working on them. Having clear policies and procedures in place to minimise the risk of abuse or harm to children and young people, and for dealing with complaints and allegations, should serve to support board members, all staff and volunteers and ease anxiety around the issues of child protection and safety. It is hoped that, over time, a network of peer support in the area of child welfare and protection within the arts sector will emerge, as individuals link up with each other and share experience and expertise.

Organisations should endeavour to raise awareness amongst board members, all staff and volunteers of the issues involved. There is an onus on everyone to report suspicions or concerns. It is important for individuals to be familiar with the definitions of abuse and to be equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and know how to take a concern or an incident forward. Once protection and welfare policies and procedures are drawn up and agreed by the board they should be made available to all staff, volunteers, clients, parents and children/young people in a managed way. It is important that all those involved understand, accept and agree to abide by them.



## The key elements of a Child Protection Policy

Every arts organisation working with children and young people should formulate a Child Protection Policy.

A Child Protection Policy comprises:

- a statement of policy, which expresses the organisation's commitment to providing a safe environment for any children and young people with whom it interacts;
- an undertaking to apply that policy throughout the organisation;
- detailed procedures and steps to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is implemented across all areas of the organisation.

The Child Protection Policy Statement should be available to all staff<sup>1</sup>, boards of management, primary carers<sup>2</sup>, children and young people involved in the organisation. The policy should be reviewed annually, with the next review date being clearly indicated.

Supporting the Child Protection Policy Statement, the organisation should formulate detailed policies and procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff – whether permanent staff, volunteers, facilitators or interns;
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse;
- Confidentiality;
- Recruiting and selecting staff;
- Managing and supervising staff;
- Circulating information to staff, primary carers and participants;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff;
- Complaints and comments;
- Incidents and accidents.

Each section of this booklet suggests policies and procedures for arts organisations to implement in each of these different areas.

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<sup>1</sup>Staff' refers to staff, volunteers, facilitators, interns.

<sup>2</sup>Primary carer' refers to parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s) as appropriate.

## Section 1 – Child Protection Policy Statement

A Child Protection Policy Statement is a statement of the organisation's intention to provide a safe environment for any children and young people with whom it interacts. It also describes the policies and procedures that have been put in place by the organisation to ensure this safe environment.

The following is a template of what a Child Protection Policy Statement might look like. It should take account of the individual arts organisation's activities, structure and environment.

### Child Protection Policy Statement

We [name of organisation] are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children<sup>3</sup> and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff;
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse (see Appendix 1 for categories of abuse);
- Confidentiality;
- Recruitment and selecting staff;
- Managing and supervising staff;
- Involvement of primary carers;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff;
- Complaints and comments;
- Incidents and accidents.

This policy will be reviewed on [date].

[Signed by Designated Person] \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup> The Child Care Act 1991 defines a child as a 'person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married' (S.2.1).

## Section 2 - Code of behaviour for staff

A code of behaviour for staff is an essential element of any arts organisation's Child Protection Policy. This will help to create a supportive environment for staff to provide a child-centred approach for children and young people.

A separate code of behaviour for children and young people should be drawn up with each individual group with the involvement of the group members.

The following is an example of a code of behaviour for staff:

### The code of behaviour can be categorised under the following headings:

- Child-centred approach;
- Good practice;
- Inappropriate behaviour;
- Physical contact;
- Health and safety.

### Child-centred approach

- Treat all children and young people equally;
- Listen to and respect children and young people;
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all children and young people as individuals;
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers;
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session;
- Encourage feedback from group;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

## Good practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures;
- Organisations should have an anti-bullying policy. Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy. (For further information on anti-bullying policy see 'Our Duty to Care', Fact sheet 2, Department of Health and Children, 2002);
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations; have guidelines and a prompt sheet for artists;
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers;
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

## Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people;
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language<sup>4</sup>.
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

## Physical contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

## Health and safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly.

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<sup>4</sup> However, work emanating from the artistic process and work of artistic content will not be censored in this way.

## Section 3 – Reporting procedures

All arts organisations should appoint a Designated Person to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare within the organisation and to respond to any concerns that may be identified. A deputy should also be appointed to cover this role when the Designated Person is unavailable or if he or she is directly involved in an incident, suspicion or accusation.

The Designated Person and his or her deputy should be in senior positions within the organisation. Appropriate training should be provided for both.

- Think about which senior people in your arts organisation would be appropriate for the role of Designated Person and Deputy Designated Person;
- They should be comfortable dealing with the topic of child protection and welfare;
- Professional development and network support should be provided for the Designated Person and his or her deputy;
- It should be very clear to all staff, primary carers and children/young people who has been designated to deal with child protection issues and how to contact him or her.

The following is an example of a staff notice about a Designated Person:

### Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare

[name] has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

[name of Designated Person] can be contacted at [location and phone number].

[name] has been designated as deputy to [name of Deputy Designated Person] and can be contacted at [location and phone number].

The following excerpt from *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (4.3.2 - p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
- (ii) an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse [an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour];
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

## Recording procedures

Every arts organisation should have a system and mechanism for recording concerns about the protection of children and young people, e.g., an incident book. Policy should state very clearly where records are kept and who has access to them. They should be stored securely and confidentiality should be maintained (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement).

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

- Suspicions;
- Concerns;
- Worrying observations;
- Behavioural changes;
- Actions and outcomes.

## Dealing with a disclosure

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say;
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details;
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

## Reporting procedures

Organisations should develop very clear reporting procedures for matters relating to a child/young person's safety and welfare.

- The reporting procedure should be known and accessible to all staff;
- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed;
- Actions and outcomes should be noted;
- Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts (for example in an incident book). Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts;
- Inform the Designated Person or his or her deputy, if unavailable;
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk;
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement);

- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive. (See Appendix 4 for sample form.) Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;
- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly;
- In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.

## Section 4 - Confidentiality statement

A confidentiality statement should give clear guidance about the issues of sharing information and maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

A confidentiality statement should include the following points:

### Confidentiality statement

We in [name of organisation] are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances);
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

## Section 5 - Recruiting and selecting staff

All arts organisations should formulate recruitment and selection procedures that ensure – as far as possible – the safety and protection of children and young people. The organisation's recruitment and selection policy should operate in tandem with its Human Resources policy.

All staff who will have or are likely to have contact with children and young people should undergo a recruitment process in line with these procedures and appropriate to their level of contact with children and young people.

In formulating policy the organisation should take cognisance of equal opportunities legislation. Ultimately, common sense and sound judgment should be applied in the process of selecting and recruiting staff.

The following is an example of a recruitment and selection policy statement:

### Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary);
- Posts will be advertised widely;
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form;
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form;
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary;
- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process;
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
- Some of the exclusions would include:
  - any child-related convictions;
  - refusal to sign application form and declaration form;
  - insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
  - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- There will be a relevant probationary period;<sup>5</sup>
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought.

**It is advisable that arts organisations seek legal advice when developing policy and procedures in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of staff.**

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<sup>5</sup> Organisations need to specify what the probationary period will be.

## Section 6 - Managing and supervising staff

The responsible management of staff involves having procedures in place to cover training, induction, supervision and the review of work practices.

New staff should receive induction training and should be made aware of policies and procedures, ideally this will be supported by a staff handbook.

Freelance staff should agree to abide by the organisation's Child Protection Policy Statement. In the event that a freelancer has his or her own policy, the organisation must ensure that it is consistent with its own policy.

The following is an example of a staff management policy statement:

### Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that:

New staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session;
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
- Undergo a probationary or trial period.

All staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
- Be provided with child protection training.

## Section 7 – Involvement of primary carers

Arts organisations should explicitly state in their guidelines how they intend to involve and share information with primary carers (parents, carers or responsible adults) in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

The following is an example of a policy statement on the involvement of primary carers.

### Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy;
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities;
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant;
- Comply with health and safety practices;
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines;
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate;
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person;
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk;
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

## Section 8 - Dealing with allegations against staff

In the event of allegations being made against an employee (staff or voluntary), the protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration.

The organisation has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and employee. The same person must not have responsibility for dealing with the child/young person welfare issues and the staff employment issues.

An allegation against an employee should be assessed promptly and carefully. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a formal report to the Health Service Executive should be made. The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. The organisation should maintain a close liaison with the Health Service Executive and the Gardaí. Employers should ensure that their actions do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by Health Service Executive and the Gardaí.

Agreed procedures should be followed in the context of the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice. The employer should take protective measures appropriate to the level of risk while not unreasonably penalising the worker – unless necessary to protect the child/young person. Protective measures might mean increased supervision, assignment to different duties, or suspension. Organisations may want to seek legal advice on procedures or protocol to deal with allegations against staff.

### Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person [name of person] will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made [name of person] will deal with issues related to the staff member.
  - The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
  - If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted;
  - The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner;
  - The staff member will be informed as soon as possible
    - of the nature of the allegation;
    - the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond;
  - The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
  - Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí;
  - After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

## Section 9 - Complaints and comments procedures

All organisations should have a complaints and comments procedure. Primary carers, children/ young people and staff should all be made aware of these procedures. Consideration should be given to an appeals procedure.

A complaints and comments procedure could include the following:

### In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within [x] weeks;
- [Name of person] has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

## Section 10 - Accidents procedure

Organisations should have a Health and Safety Statement that should include a risk assessment of each area of operation. Procedures to follow in the event of an accident should be formulated. This should include information along the following lines:

### Accidents procedure

- The organisation must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation;
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
- External organisations with whom your organisation has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;
- First-aid boxes should be available and regularly re-stocked;
- The location of the first-aid box(es) must be made known to staff;
- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff;
- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material;
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk;
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.

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Catherine Kelly	Westmeath County Council
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Jane O'Hanlon	Poetry Ireland
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John Ruddy	Calipo Theatre Company
Maria Schweppe	Dublin Youth Theatre

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### Cork Group:

Peggy Amison	Sirius Arts Centre
Anna Barden	Munster Literature Centre
Anne Boddaert	Crawford Municipal Art Gallery
Oliver Breslin	Waterford Youth Drama
Ronnie Fitzgerald	South Tipperary Arts Centre
Jayne Foley	Fresh Film Festival
Oliver Hurley	Siamsa Tire
Rosina Joyce	Irish Association of Youth Orchestras
Pippa Little	Limerick City Gallery
Peter McNamara	Belltable Arts Centre
Jim Myers	Galloglass Theatre Company
Victoria O'Brien	Daghdha Dance Company
Kim O'Dee	Cill Rialaig Project
Karen O'Shea	Graffiti Theatre Company
Catherine Pearson O'Dwyer	Samhlaíocht Chiarri
Jan O'Sullivan	Red Kettle Theatre Company
Una Quigley	Crawford Municipal Art Gallery
Frances Shanahan	Irish Chamber Orchestra
Antonia Splini	Garter Lane Arts Centre

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**Dublin Group:**

Mary Elizabeth Burke Kennedy	Storytellers Theatre Company
Anne Campbell-Crawford	Irish National Youth Ballet Company
Trish Lambe	Gallery of Photography
Norma Leen	St. Patrick's Festival
Orlaith McBride	National Association for Youth Drama
Deirdre McCrea	Music Network
Emer McGowan	Draíocht
Eida Mitroni	Temple Bar Gallery and Studios
Bairbre Ní Chaoimh	Calypso Productions
Polly O'Loughlin	Pavilion Theatre
Claire Ranson	Children's Books Ireland
Mariam Ribon	Dublin Youth Dance Company
Ann Ryan	Irish Film Institute
Donal Shiels	Second Age Theatre Company
Jenny Traynor	CoisCéim Dance Theatre
Loretta Yurick	Dance Theatre of Ireland

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**Galway Group:**

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Mary Butler	Kilkenny County Council
Dave Donovan	Macnas
Marie Farrell	Linenhall Arts Centre
Margaret Flannery	Galway Arts Centre
Mary Hanley	Ramor Theatre
Orlagh Heverin	Galway Arts Centre
Anica Louw	Shawbrook /LD Dance Trust
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Maureen Crowley	Southern Area
Margaret Fitzgerald	Southern Area

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## APPENDIX 1: Definitions of abuse

There are four main categories of abuse as outlined in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. The following is a synopsis of the information contained in that document. For the full definitions please refer to *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* 1993 (pp.32-34).

### 1. Neglect

“Neglect can be defined as being where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care....The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.” (*Children First* p.31)

### 2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse usually happens where there is a relationship between a carer and a child rather than as a specific incident or incidents.

“Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.” (*Children First* p.31)

Rather, it can manifest in the child’s behaviour or physical functioning. Examples of these include ‘anxious’ attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement and uncooperative or hostile behaviour.

“The threshold of significant harm is reached when interaction is predominantly abusive and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/ carer.” (*Children First* p.32)

Examples of emotional abuse in children include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carer;
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way;
- Under or over-protection of the child;
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline;
- Exposure to domestic violence.

### 3. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following:

- Shaking;
- Use of excessive force in handling;
- Deliberate poisoning;
- Suffocation;
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child.

### 4. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves the use of a child for gratification or sexual arousal by a person for themselves or others.

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- Sexual intercourse with a child whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- Sexual exploitation of a child... may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse;
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person.

## APPENDIX 2: List of Health Service Executive Area Social Work Department Contact Details

	East Coast Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Area 1	Principal Social Worker Duty Social Worker Our Lady's Clinic Patrick Street Dun Laoghaire Co. Dublin	01 – 2365130 01 – 2808403	01 – 2365139 01 – 2844995
Area 2	Principal & Duty Social Worker Vergemount Hall Clonskeagh Dublin 6	01 – 2680320/0333	01 - 2680406
Area 10	Principal Social Worker Duty Social Worker Glenside Road Health Centre Wicklow Town	0404 – 68400 0404 – 60800	0404 – 69044 0404 – 60888
	Principal Social Worker Duty Social Worker Bray Health Centre, Block B Civic Offices Main Street Bray	01 – 2871482 01 – 2744100	01 – 2871490 01 – 2744136

	Northern Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Area 6	Principal Social Worker Duty Social Worker Welmount Health Centre Finglas, Dublin 11.	01 – 8680444 01 – 8567704	01 – 8825153 01 – 8567702
Area 7	Principal Social Worker Duty Social Worker 22 Mountjoy Square Dublin 1	01 – 8556871 01 – 8014620	01 – 8550589 01 – 8014603
Area 8	Principal Social Worker & Duty Social Worker Health Centre Cromcastle Road Coolock Dublin 5	01 – 8164200	01 – 8479593

	South-Western Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Dublin South City District	<i>Principal Social Worker</i> <i>Duty Social Worker</i> Carnegie Centre 21-25 Lord Edward Street Dublin 2	01 – 6486650 01 – 6486555	01 – 6799303 01 – 6486702
Dublin South West District	<i>Principal Social Worker</i> <i>Duty Social Worker</i> Health Centre Millbrook Lawns Tallaght Dublin 24	01 – 4154700/739 01 – 4520666	01 – 4154804 01 – 4520501
Dublin West District	<i>Principal &amp; Duty Social Worker</i> Bridge House Cherry Orchard Hospital Ballyfermot Dublin 10	01 – 6206387	01 – 6206388
Kildare/West Wicklow District	<i>Principal Social Worker</i> <i>Duty Social Worker</i> Swan Centre Fairgreen Naas Co. Kildare	045 – 896120 045 – 882400	045 – 896455 045 – 882424
	Athy Health Centre Woodstock Street Athy Co. Kildare	059 – 8633535	059 – 8633566
	Celbridge Health Centre Maynooth Road Celbridge Co. Kildare	01 – 6303155	01 – 6303112

	Midland Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Longford/Westmeath	Child & Family Centre Pettitswood Mullingar Co. Westmeath	044 – 84450	044 – 84396
	Health Centre Coosan Road Athlone Co. Westmeath	09064 – 83106	09064 – 83149
	Tivoli House Dublin Road Longford	043 – 50584	043 – 50798
Laois/Offaly	Community Care Office O'Carroll Street Tullamore Co. Offaly	0506 – 22488	0506 – 21136
	<i>Duty Social Worker</i> Co. Laois	0502 – 92567/8	0502 – 62535

	Mid-Western Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Limerick	Limerick West: Southill, Kilmallock, Newcastle West Unit 3 St. Camillus's Shelbourne Road Limerick	061 – 483996	061 – 483778
	Limerick East: Roxtown, Cappamore, Moyross, Ballynanty	061 – 483711 (3-5pm)	061 – 483757
Clare	River House Gort Road Ennis	065 – 6863907 065 – 6863908	065 - 6863984
North Tipperary	Social Work Department Annbrook Limerick Road Nenagh	067 – 41934	067 - 42069
	St. Mary's Health Centre Parnell Street Thurles	0504 – 23211	0504 – 24638

	North-Eastern Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Cavan/ Monaghan	Local Health Care Unit Rooskey Monaghan (or) Child and Family Services HSE Drumalee Cootehill Rd. Cavan	047 – 30473 047 – 30426/27  049 – 4377305/06	047 – 77908
Louth	3rd Floor Nurses Residence Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda Co. Louth	041 – 9875282	041 – 9875244
	Balls Grove Health Centre Drogheda Co. Louth	041 – 9833163	041 – 9839968
	Wilton House Stapleton Place Dundalk Co. Louth	042 – 9392220	042 – 9392265

	North-Western Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Sligo/Leitrim	Community Services Markievicz House Sligo	071 – 9155133/36	071 – 9155187
Donegal	Garden Centre St. Conal's Hospital Letterkenny Co. Donegal	074 – 9123739	074 – 9129752

	South-Eastern Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Carlow/ Kilkenny	SEHB 11 Patrick Street Kilkenny	056 – 7784781/82	056 – 7762741
	<i>Duty Social Worker</i> Carlow	059 – 9136587/8	059 – 9136502
Waterford	Community Care Centre Cork Road Waterford	051 – 842880/2	051 – 842811
	<i>Duty Social Worker</i>	051 – 842827	051 – 842811
Wexford	Ely Hospital Wexford	053 – 47718	053 – 47706
South Tipperary	Yellow House St. Luke's Hospital Western Road Clonmel Co. Tipperary	052 – 77302/3	052 – 77301
	<i>Duty Social Worker</i>	052 – 77306	

	Southern Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
South Lee	Social Work Department St. Finbarr's Hospital Cork	021 – 4923001	021 – 4312960
North Lee	Social Work Department Floor 2 adjacent to Blackpool S/C Blackpool Cork	021 – 4927000	021 – 4927001 021 – 4927002
North Cork	134 Bank Place Mallow Co. Cork	022 – 54100	022 – 54150
West Cork	Community Care Coolnagarrane Skibbereen Cork	028 – 40447 028 – 40456	028 – 23172
Kerry	28 Moyderwell Tralee Co. Kerry	066 – 7184887	066 – 7184890
	<i>Duty Social Worker</i>	066 – 7184869/68	

	Western Area		
Community Care Area	Area social work department		
	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Galway	Community Care Services 25 Newcastle Road Galway	091 – 546366 091 – 546325	091 – 527601 091 – 524231
Mayo	Hill House Mountainview Castlebar Co. Mayo	094 – 9042283 094 – 9042284	094 – 9026110
Roscommon	Abbey Town House Abbey Street Roscommon	090 – 6626732	090 – 6626776
	<i>Duty Social Worker</i>	090 – 6637528/29	090 – 6627043

## APPENDIX 3: List of Health Service Executive 'Keeping Safe' Information and Advice Persons

Name	Area	Contact Address	Contact No.	E-Mail
Brid Burke	HSE, W.H.A. Galway	Community Services, The Annex, Western Area, Health Service Executive, Seamus Quirke Rd., Galway	T: 091 – 548440 F: 091 – 524226 M: 086 – 2556103	brid.burke@mailn.hse.ie
Sandra Claxton	HSE, W.H.A. Roscommon, Mayo	Mayo Community Services, Mayo Headquarters, Old Westport Rd., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.	T: 094 – 9042579 F: 094 – 9020452 M: 087 – 9074668	sandra.claxton@mailn.hse.ie
Charney Weitzman	HSE, Midland Area, Longford, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly	Child Care Unit, Unit 4, Central Business Park, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.	T: 0506 – 57842 F: 0506 – 57846 M: 086 – 8157030	charney.weitzman@mailq.hse.ie
Noreen Herron	HSE, N.W.A Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, Cavan.	Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo.	T: 071 – 9155133 F: 071 – 9155142 M: 087 – 9090480	noreen.herron@mailb.hse.ie
Sinead Twomey	HSE, Southern Area, North Lee, North Cork, Kerry.	Ellis House, Ballyvolane Commercial Park, Ballyvolane, Cork.	T: 021 – 4529010 F: 021 – 4529028 M: 087 – 4194335	stwormeys4@shb.ie
Maureen Crowley	HSE, Southern Area, North Lee, South Lee, West Cork,	Ellis House, Ballyvolane Commercial Park, Ballyvolane, Cork.	T: 021 – 4529010 F: 021 – 4529028	maureen.crowley@mailp.hse.ie
Laura Nee	HSE, M.W.A. Tipperary North	Child Care Manager's Dept., Annbrook, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.	T: 067 – 38314 F: 067 – 38301 M: 087 – 7987854	laura.nee@mailh.hse.ie
Jan Godfrey	HSE, M.W.A. Clare	River House, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.	T: 065 – 6863919 F: 065 – 6863983 M: 087 – 6184964	jan.godfrey@mailh.hse.ie
Ann Murray	HSE, M.W.A. Limerick.	87 O'Connell Street, Limerick.	T: 061 – 483520 F: 061 – 468902 M: 086 – 8508353	ann.murray@mailh.hse.ie
Anne Purcell	HSE, S.E.A. Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, South Tipperary.	Health Centre, HSE, S.E.A., Castlehill, Carlow.	T: 059 – 9133797/ 9136520 F: 0503 – 36550 M: 087 – 7985062	ann.purcell@maila.hse.ie

Name	Area	Contact Address	Contact No.	E-Mail
Edwina Flavin	HSE, S.W.A. Dublin South City, Dublin South West, Dublin West, Kildare, West Wicklow.	Children & Families, Training & Development Unit, Unit 4044 City West Business Campus, Saggart, Co. Dublin.	T: 01 – 4691720 F: 01 – 469 1728 M: 086 – 380 3925	edwina.flavin@ mailm.hse.ie
Jan Perrin	HSE, S.W.A. Dublin South City, Dublin South West, Dublin West, Kildare, West Wicklow.	Children & Families, Training & Development Unit, Unit 4044 City West Business Campus, Saggart, Co. Dublin.	T: 01 – 4691720 F: 01 – 4691728 M: 086 – 3803926	jan.perrin@ mailm.hse.ie
Mary Tallon	HSE, S.W.A. Dublin South City, Dublin South West, Dublin West, Kildare, West Wicklow.	Children & Families, Training & Development Unit, Unit 4044 City West Business Campus, Saggart, Co. Dublin.	T: 01 – 4691720 F: 01 – 4691728 M: 087 – 7988863	mary.tallon@ mailm.hse.ie
Lorraine Egan	HSE, E.C.A. Community Care Area 1,2, 10 (Wicklow)	Child Youth & Family Dept., HSE, E.C.A. HQ., Block B, Civic Centre Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow.	T: 01 – 2744273 F: 01 – 2744281 M: 086 – 3801603	lorraine.egan@ ecahb.ie
Kathryn Morris	HSE, N.E.A. Meath.	26 Brews Hill, Navan, Co. Meath. Ennis, Co. Clare.	T: 046 – 9027359 M: 087 – 6237618	kathryn.morris@ maile.hse.ie
Deirdre Horan-Martin	HSE, N.E.A. Cavan/ Monaghan	Old Rooskey Offices, HSE, Rooskey, Monaghan.	T: 047 – 30470 M: 087 – 9672724	deirdrem.horanmartin@ maile.hse.ie
Sheelagh Broderick	HSE, Southern Area	Ellis House, Ballyvolane Commercial Park, Ballyvolane, Cork.	T: 021 – 4529010 F: 021 – 4529028 M: 087 – 2224829	sheelagh.broderick@ mailp.hse.ie
Margaret Fitzgerald	HSE, Southern Area	Ellis House, Ballyvolane, Commercial Park, Ballyvolane, Cork.	T: 021 – 4529010 F: 021 – 4529028	margaret.fitzgerald@ mailp.hse.ie

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
**STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS**

In case of Emergency or outside Health Service Executive office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Principal Social Worker  
or Duty Social Worker : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Details of Child:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male:  Female:   
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age/D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_

1a. Name of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address of Mother if different to Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Address of Father if different to Child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known: \_\_\_\_\_

1c. Household Composition:

Name:	Relationship to Child:	Date of Birth:	Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation:

**Note:** A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Health Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ Gardai: \_\_\_\_\_  
G.P.: \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_ Other, specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs: \_\_\_\_\_

5a. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Yes  No

5b. Are the Parents/Legal Guardians supportive? Yes  No

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of Confidentiality)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**GUIDANCE NOTES:**

The Health Service Executive has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. The Health Service Executive therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive Personnel.
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the Health Service Executive.
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency.
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Service Executive personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

The Health Service Executive aims to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998. If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

(Local arrangements to be inserted.)

## APPENDIX 5:

### Sample Volunteer Reference Form Confidential

\_\_\_\_\_ has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with this club/organisation and has given your name as a referee.

This post involves substantial access to children and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people?

Yes  No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor, should they be offered a volunteer position. We would appreciate you being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes them a suitable volunteer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe their personality? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate this person on the following (please tick):

	Poor	Average	Good	V/Good	Excellent
Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maturity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivation of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trustworthiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration Form  
Confidential**

Declaration form for all those working with children and young people.

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile No: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other name(s) previously known as: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people?    Yes     No

If yes, please outline the reason below.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence?    Yes     No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence (s):

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 7:

### Key Actions Checklist

Key things to do	Who is responsible	By when	Done ✓
Involve C.E.O. (if not already)			
Appoint Designated Person (D.P.) and Deputy Designated Person (D.D.P.)			
Establish what support is available for the D.P. and D.D.P.			
Draw up code of behaviour for staff			
Devise Child Protection Policy Statement			
Devise policy for recruitment, training, support and supervision (including a Volunteer Reference Form and a Sample Declaration Form)			
Establish procedures around recording information (on incidents and suspicions) and around reporting incidents			
Draw up a confidentiality statement			
Devise procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against staff			
Seek feedback on your new guidelines from legal advisor			
Inform the Board of new Child Protection policies and procedures			
Plan induction for staff/new staff/ volunteers/interns			
Let parents and children and young people know about your new policies and procedures around Child Protection (for example with a fact sheet)			
Review the policy annually			
<b>Please note: this is not a definitive list</b>			

### Further reading/reference

- *Our Duty to Care - The principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people* Department of Health and Children 2002
- *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* Department of Health and Children 1999
- *Child Protection Guidelines* National Youth Federation 2004
- *Code of Ethics Good practice for Children's Sport* Irish Sports Council 2000
- *Code of Good Practice: Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* Department of Education and Science 2003

Legislation relating to child protection and welfare:

- Child Care Act 1991
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992

