



# Ionad Cultúr agus Dearadh An Fháirche Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta

# Child Safeguarding Statement

**Final 1 June 2022**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Directors signed below.

Name	Signature	Role	Date
Barry Lambe		Director	
Patricia Walsh		Director Secretary	
Mary Lee		Director Treasurer	

# 1. Name of Society.

Ionad Cultúr agus Dearadh An Fháirche Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta

## The Management Structure:

All Saints Heritage Centre (ASHC) is operated by by Ionad Cultúr agus Dearadh An Fháirche Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta, (Company Registration No.315890, Reg. Charity No. CHY17569). We are a charity for the purpose of promoting and supporting heritage, culture, the Irish language, craftspersons, artists, and arts of all kinds. We promote our community's development as a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community that honours it's past and consciously creates its future.

Our strategy, fiscal responsibility, and governance is by a volunteer three person Board of Directors (with an appointed secretary, and Treasurer, as required by the Charities Regulator). We form committees of volunteers to carry out the various legs of our strategic mission from members of the community at large; the committees are headed by our Chairperson, also a volunteer. Some committees are largely permanent, while others are program or event specific.

Director: Barry Lambe  
Director/Secretary: Patricia Walsh  
Director/Treasurer: Mary E Lee

Chairperson: Gerladine Morrin

## **Commitment to Safe Guarding Children from Harm**

Our Board of Directors, committees and sub committees are committed to safeguarding children and to providing a safe event environment

- We believe that the welfare of the children attending our events is paramount. We are committed to child centred practice in all our work with children.
  - We are committed to holding the rights of every child and young person, who attends our events, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard. Our policies and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are under pinned by children first national guidance for the protection and welfare of children, DCYA, 2017, child safeguarding a guide for policy, practice and procedure, TUSLA, 2018, children’s first act 2015.
  - Our policy declaration applies to all Board and committee members, paid groups, volunteers and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee members, paid groups, volunteers and students must agree to abide by the policies, procedures and guidance by this policy declaration and our child safe guarding policy and our company policies and procedures.
  - We will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every 2 years or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
- Designated liaison person (DLP) for child protection

<p><b>DLP:</b>  <b>General:</b> Trish Walsh  <b>Per Event:</b> designated during event planning  <b>Per Facilities Rental:</b> identified during contracting by rental point of contact</p>	<p><b>DEPUTY DLP:</b>  <b>General:</b> TBD  <b>Per Event:</b> designated during event planning  <b>Per Facilities Rental:</b> identified during contracting by rental point of contact</p>
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## 2.Risk Assessment

In accordance with the children’s first Act 2015, we have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending our events or participating in event activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks are summarised below.

### Person(s) carrying out Risk Assessment:

Risk Identified	Who is Responsible?	What is Currently in Place to Manage the Risk	What Future Actions are Needed?
· Un supervised children	· Parents and/or carers	· Announcements that adults are responsible for their own children are frequent & written signs.	· On going
· Events	Parents/Carers	· Specific risk assessments are carried out for each event as they arise.	· periodic updating the risk assessment template to suit each individual event.

<p>Photos or publication of photos of children – being used inappropriately</p>	<p>Parents/ Carers</p> <p>Committee members</p>	<p>Unauthorised use of any photos is strictly prohibited by committee members. Use of photos of children on any social media accounts is prohibited unless permission is given. Permission will always be sought at each event.</p> <p>Announcements not to use photos on social media</p>	<p>Ensure all committee members are updated on procedures regarding use of photos.</p>
<p>Data Protection.</p>	<p>Committee members</p>	<p>Permission is sought to use people data in appropriate manner and information is provided as to what their data is used for.</p>	<p>Ongoing updates to committee members as per legislation.</p>

<p>Person of harm at an event</p>	<p>Committee members  (safety officers)</p>	<p>All personnel are familiar with appropriate behaviour from the general public. Garda are to be notified if a person of harm is present at an event.</p>	<p>Consistent updating and reminding committee members what appropriate behaviour is.</p>
<p>Person not capable/suitable to be working at an event.</p>	<p>Committee members</p>	<p>Observation of all committee members, paid groups, volunteers etc by assigned person at an event.</p>	<p>upskilling on appropriate behaviours at an event and clear understanding on what is acceptable.</p>
<p>New committee members unaware of policies and procedures of the committee and sub committees including our safe guarding policy.</p>	<p>Secretary  Directors  Chairs</p>	<p>All new committee members will be given the child safeguarding policy.</p>	<p>upskilling and collaboration with sub committees on current legislation.</p>

### 3. Child safe guarding policies and procedures.

As required by the Children’s First Act 2015 & Children’s National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place.

- Key Roles in Safeguarding.
- Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures.
- Confidentiality Policy.
- Dealing with allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Members.
- Managing Child Protection Records.
- Garda Vetting Policy.
- Code of Behaviour for working with children.
- Induction, Training, Supervision and Support of Members.
- Complaints Policy.
- Policy for Managing Events.
- Policy for Managing Accidents & Incidents.
- Social Media Policy.

#### 1 Key Roles in Safeguarding Policy.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for dealing with Child Protection and Welfare Concerns in accordance with Children First National Guidance 2017 & Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement.

##### 1.1 Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Liaison Person has been appointed:

<p><b>DLP:</b> <b>General:</b> Trish Walsh <b>Per Event:</b> designated during event planning <b>Per Facilities Rental:</b> identified during contracting by rental point of contact</p>	<p><b>DEPUTY DLP:</b> <b>General:</b> TBD <b>Per Event:</b> designated during event planning <b>Per Facilities Rental:</b> identified during contracting by rental point of contact</p>
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**The Role of the DLP is to:**

- Be a resource person for members, students & volunteers who have a Child Protection Concern.
- Be accessible to all committee members, Students & Volunteers.
- Be knowledgeable about Child Protection and Welfare and undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments.
- Ensure that the Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures of the committee are followed so that Child Protection Concerns are referred promptly to TUSLA.
- Be responsible for reporting Child Protection Concerns to TUSLA or to an Garda Síochána either with the mandated person for referrals under the Children's First Act, 2015), or directly for all other referrals.
- Ensure that appropriate information is included in the referral and that it is submitted using the Child Protection & Welfare Report Form (available on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie))
- Liaise with TUSLA, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep appropriate people within the committee or sub-committees informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality.
- Ensure that individual record is maintained of the action taken by the committee or sub-committees the DLP with other agencies and the outcome.
- Advise the organisation of child protection training needs.
- Maintain a central log or record of all child protection and welfare concerns in the service.

**ALL** members are advised during their induction to part take in the ELearning seminar available from TUSLA and obtain a certificate for same.



# **1 Child Protection & Welfare Reporting Procedures.**

## **2.1 Recognising Child Protection & Welfare Concerns.**

- All members and volunteers have a responsibility to safe guard children and to report Child Protection & Welfare Concerns in line with the Policy below.
- Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in on going or further harm to the child.
- All members and volunteers should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in Children First: National Guidance 2017.
- Under the Children First Act, 2015 Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold (as defined in section 2 of the Children’s First Act,2015) to TUSLA. Mandated Persons should be familiar with the threshold of harm for each form of abuse as outlined in Children First: National Guidance 2017.
- All child protection concerns should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) without delay.

## **1.2 Reasonable Grounds for Concern.**

Children’s First: National Guidance 2017 states that: ‘TUSLA must always be informed when a person has a reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.’

Reasonable grounds for child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.

- Any concern about possible Sexual Abuse.
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional/physical neglect.
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he/she has been abused.
- Admission or indication by an adult/child of an alleged abused they committed.
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused.

**All members and volunteers are expected to bring any child protection concern which meet reasonable grounds for concern to the attention of the DLP and to seek their advice and guidance if they are unsure.**

### **1.3 Reporting procedure – all members and volunteers :**

All members and volunteers should follow the procedures in this section when they have a concern that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, harmed or neglected. When a committee member or volunteer has a child protection or welfare concern they should speak to the DLP without delay. This includes concerns which reach the threshold for a mandate report under the Children First Act, 2015.

- The DLP will report the following child protection and welfare concerns using the child protect and welfare report form to TUSLA.
  - Child Protection & Welfare concerns that meet reasonable ground for concern but do not meet the threshold for mandated reporting.

- Child protection & Welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern and have been passed to them by persons that are not mandated persons.
- If the DLP is unsure if the child protection concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern they should contact the TUSLA Duty Social Work Team for advice and guidance using the informal consultation process.
- Under no circumstance should a child be left in a situation that exposed him/her to harm or risk pending intervention from TUSLA. In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a TUSLA social worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.
- In addition to a report to TUSLA, if there is a criminal or suspected criminal aspect to the child protection concern, An Garda Síochána will be notified by the DLP as appropriate.

**Details:**

Duty Social Work Team, TUSLA Child & Family Agency.	An Garda Síochána
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Duty Social Worker Julie O'Donnell Local Garda Station  
Social Work Team leader &  
Eamonn Mullins Project Leader  
North Galway Family Services.

Tel: 999 / 112 (emergency)

North Galway Family Services,  
Child & Family Agency,  
The Family Centre,  
Dublin Road,  
Tuam,  
Co. Galway.

Tel: 09337264

Tel: 09337265

- In accordance with our confidentiality policy, identifying information about the child and family is only shared with people on a need to know basis.

#### 1.4 Reporting procedures – Mandated Persons only.

- Under the Children First Act, 2015 Mandated Persons are legally required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed to TUSLA.
- Mandated Persons should bring any Child Protection Concerns to the attention of the DLP without delay as stated above.
- If the child protection concern reaches the threshold of harm as defined in the Children First Act, 2015 it is a mandated report. The mandated person may seek advice and guidance from the DLP in relation to the child protection concern and the threshold of harm.
- Mandated reports will be made jointly by the mandated person who raised the concern and the DLP, using the child protection and welfare report form. The form must clearly indicate that the report is a mandated report.
- If the Child Protection Concern requires a more urgent intervention to make the child safe, the Children’s First Act, 2015 allows mandated persons to alert TUSLA of the concern, by telephone or in person, in advance of submitting a written report. The mandated report must then be submitted to TUSLA using the Child Protection and Welfare report form within 3 days.
- The statutory obligation of mandate persons to report under the Children’s First Act, 2015 **must be discharged by the mandated person and cannot be discharged by the DLP on their behalf.** Carrying on mandated persons, can however, report jointly with another person.
- Where the mandated person or DLP is unsure if the report meets the threshold of harm as outlined in the Children First Act, 2015

advice and guidance should be sought through informal consultation with the TUSLA Duty Social Work Team.

- If a child protection concern does not meet the criteria for a mandated report, it may meet reasonable grounds for concern for report to TUSLA and this possibility must be considered. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a report to TUSLA will be made by the DLP.
- The mandated person may submit the report to TUSLA solely; however, the DLP must be informed that the report has been made and be given a copy of the child protection and welfare report form.
- If a child protection concern has come to the attention of a number of mandated persons the report may be submitted jointly by a number of mandated persons.
- Mandated persons are not required to make a report to TUSLA where the sole basis of their knowledge, belief or suspicion of harm is as a result of becoming aware that another mandated person has made a report to TUSLA.

## **2.5 Informing Parents about a Child Protection and Welfare Concern**

- Communication with parents is very important in ensuring the best outcomes for children and any concerns about the health and well-being of a child will always be discussed with parents from the outset.
- Parents will always be informed by the DLP if a report is to be made to TUSLA, unless doing so would further endanger the child, impair TUSLA's ability to carry out a risk assessment, or put the reporter at risk of harm. The DLP may seek guidance from the TUSLA Duty Social Work team in relation to this.

## **2.6 Responding to Retrospective Disclosure**

- A retrospective disclosure is a disclosure from an adult about abuse that happened while they were a child. It is imperative that all child protection and welfare concerns are examined and addressed when a retrospective disclosure is made.
- If a staff member or volunteer becomes aware of a retrospective child protection concern they should follow the reporting procedures as outlined above.
- If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who maybe in contact with an alleged abuser, the service should report the concern to TUSLA without delay using the retrospective abuse report form (available on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)).

## **2.7 Child Protection that are Not Reported to TUSLA**

If the DLP decides not to report a concern to TUSLA, the following steps will be taken.

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded.
- The staff member or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to TUSLA.
- The staff member or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to TUSLA or An Garda Síochána. The protections for persons reporting child abuse act 1998 will apply to any staff member who wishes to make a report to TUSLA.

## 2.8 Recording Child Protection Concerns

- Written records will be kept of all child protection concerns (including those not reported to TUALA) and these will be managed by the DLP. Information will include: details of the concern, who raised it, who was contacted, details regarding informal consultation, any action taken, details regarding informing parents.
- If a child had made a disclosure of abuse, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.

## 2 Confidentiality Policy

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- All information regarding a concern about child abuse or neglect should be shared on a need to know basis in the best interests of the child.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given and this should be made clear to children and families using the service.
- The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.
- Parents will always be informed if a report is being made to TUSLA unless doing so would further endanger the child, impair TUSLA's ability to carry out a risk assessment or put the reporter at risk of harm.



- Under the Children's First Act, 2015, information shared by TUSLA with a mandated person in the course of carrying out an assessment, arising from a mandated report, shall not be disclosed to a third party unless TUSLA has provided written authorisation to this effect.

## **3 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Members or Volunteers**

### **3.1 Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Members or Volunteers.**

- The protection and welfare of the children at any of our events are paramount and their safety and well-being is the priority. However, the committee also has a duty and responsibility, as a society in respect of its members and volunteers. It is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a member or volunteer:
  1. Reporting procedure in respect of any child protection and welfare concern.
  2. The procedure in respect of the allegation against the committee member.

Two different people will be nominated to manage each procedure.

- The DLP is responsible for any issues under Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC child protection and welfare reporting while the Chairperson is responsible for addressing the issue with the member.

- Any child protection concerns arising through an allegation against a member or volunteer will be considered under the services child protection and welfare reporting procedures and reported to TUSLA without delay if necessary.
- All members and volunteers in the committee should contact the chairperson should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any member of the committee.
- Written records are very important. If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure will be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it. Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written record of the allegation must be made and a written statement will be sought from this person.
- Where the chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by and committee member while executing their duties, she will privately inform the committee member of the following:
  - a. The fact that an allegation has been made against them.
  - b. The nature of the allegation.
- The committee member will be afforded the opportunity to respond. The response will be noted and passed to TUSLA with the formal report.
- All stages of the process will be recorded.
- An investigation will be required, the chair will carry out such investigation. The committee member will be suspended pending a full investigation of the matter(s). If, after investigation, the case is proven, then the committee members involvement with the committee will be terminated without previous warning.

- Whether or not the matter is being reported to TUSLA the chairperson is always informed of any allegation of abuse or neglect against a committee member.
- Confidentiality: it is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedure within the policy.
- Protective measures will be required while the allegation is being investigated employee will be on leave during the investigation and invited to a meeting to discuss outcomes. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures will be adhered to.
- The Chairperson will maintain regular and close liaison with TUSLA and/or An Garda Síochána and she will ensure that no action by the service frustrates or undermines any investigation.
- Further action will be guided by legislation.

### **3.2 Parents and allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employee**

- Parents have the right to contact TUSLA to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about the committee member or committee.
- Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be kept informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.
- If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed, their parents will be informed immediately.

## **4 Managing Child Protection Records**

It is the policy of Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC that all Child protection Records will be maintained in a safe, secure and proper manner.

- Only committee members involved with a particular case will have access to confidential files.
- All records will be managed in line with Data Protection Policy.

## **5 New Members Policy**

Under the children's first act, 2015, Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC policy is to recruit suitable competent members & volunteers.

- All members & volunteers who deal with children are advised to completed the ELearning Child Protection training online BEFORE they start any volunteering.

## **6 Garda Vetting Policy**

It is the policy of Ionad Cultúr to ensure that applicable practices for vetting are in line with Garda Vetting requirements before beginning any work that includes contact with children or vulnerable persons.

# 7Code of Behaviour for Working with Children

It is the policy of Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC that all children are treated with the upmost respect and dignity while at our events. A code of behaviour is an important aspect of Child Safeguarding as it sets out the standards expected from all committee members and volunteers and outlines what is acceptable when working with children.

General codes of behaviour include:

- All committee members and parents are expected to value and respect all children as individuals.
- All members and parents are expected to listen to children.
- All members and parents MUST speak to children using an appropriate tone of voice and appropriate use of language especially during any approach to a child's negative behaviour.
- All children will be involved in decision making as appropriate.
- Children will be encouraged to express themselves.
- All members and parents will be expected to value difference.
- All members will be committed to implementing and adhering to all relevant policies to keep children safe.
- All members will maintain a dignified approach to interacting with children.
- Children will NOT be talked down to or shouted at.
- Parents must report any concerns directly to a member of the sitting committee.

- Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC believe that discipline should be only done by ones parent. With this in mind we use the best practice of communication with parents and will inform parents immediately of any issues witnessed by committee members or volunteers at any events.
- During an incident/issue committee members will calmly intervene and address each incident/issue in an age appropriate manner with the use of appropriate language and direct children to their parents or carers responsible for them on the day.

○Managing/supervising Activities

- Members that are managing or supervising activities will maintain an understanding of the responsibility of their position. They will be aware of the responsibility of the designated person in charge and will understand and uphold ALL policies and procedures across all aspects of the event.

○Use of mobile phone and Technology

- Signs will be displayed around an event asking people not to post photos of other peoples children on social media sites.

○Touch and Physical Contact.

- Touch and physical contact will be governed by the age and developmental stage of a child and carried out appropriately.
- All children are different and may need assistance in different ways.
- Members are reminded of appropriate physical contact with a child as per their child protection training.
- Touch will be in response to the needs of a child and not the adult.
- Touch and Physical Contact should be open and not secretive.

#### ○Communication With Children.

- Communication with children will be done through age appropriate respectful language.
- All children are encouraged to communicate with their peers in a respectful and appropriate manner always.

All committee members, parents and management have a duty of care to adhere to the code of behaviour and to bring breaches of the code to the attention of management. Breaches of this code of behaviour will be dealt with appropriately.

## **9 Induction, Training, Supervision and Support for members**

### **9.1 Policy**

It is the policy of Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC and its sub committees to fulfil our obligations under the Children's First Act, 2015 and the code of Behaviour, that ALL new members & volunteers receive an Induction

before any event. All new members will receive a copy of these safeguarding procedures, when welcomed onto our committee.

## **9.2 Training on Child Safeguarding**

- The DLP and Deputy DLP will be supported to attend Always Children First Training and/or other relevant training as identified.
- ALL members & volunteers will be encouraged and supported to completed the *'Introduction to Children First'* Child Protection ELearning from TUSLA.
- Collaboration relating to all Child Protection will be welcomed by the committee and sub-committees from any relevant bodies.

## **9.3 Members Support and Supervision Policy**

- Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC understand the importance of supervision and guidance of all workers, volunteers etc. A committee member before an event will be made responsible for overseeing all volunteers and ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities.

# **10 Complaints Policy**

Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC work in partnership with the community by seeking their views and encouraging all to participate in any decision making in relation to the community. We welcome comments/suggestions on the delivery of the community council.

### **Procedures for Responding to a Complaint:**

- We undertake to ensure all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly, impartially and confidentiality.



- We will endeavour to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with complainant and member of the committee as appropriate.
- All will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation should an issue arise.
- If we find that we have made a mistake or that something could have been done better we will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in the future.
- Complaints can be made by anyone who sees fit.
- If a complainant is not satisfied with any aspect of the committee, they are requested to resolve the issue informally through discussion with the committee member.
- If the problem persists, re-occurs or the person is not satisfied with the response, the complaint should be put in writing to the chairperson at the time.
- The chairperson will meet with the person making the complaint and any other committee member as appropriate to try to resolve the issue. A note will be made of this meeting and copies made available to persons involved.
- Most complaints are resolved at this stage. However, if there are other or more serious issues arising from the complaint or it cannot be resolved then both sides may agree for a third party to mediate.
- Written records will be kept of all written complaints, the response, meetings and other actions and records kept for a minimum of 2 years.
- Written complaints will be acknowledged in writing.
- All complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and the person making the complaint will be informed of the next steps of the process at every stage.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint the legal Procedures may also be followed.

# 11 Policy for Managing Events

Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC aims to provide people in the community with a varied and wide experience at our events. It is our policy to ensure the safety and well-being of children during these activities through planning, risk assessment, management and supervision of the activity.

## 11.1 Managing and Planning events

The following will be considered in planning events.

- All events will be planned in advance and a risk assessment will be carried out with regard to the following issues: safety in regard to method facilities, activities, accessibility for children with additional needs and emergencies.
- We will ensure that the method of transport complies with relevant safety requirements and insurance if required.
- We will ensure that adequate insurance is in place.
- An outline of the details of the event and related activities will be drawn up in writing by the committee.
- Emergency contacts will be drawn up and on site.
- Children must be appropriately supervised at all times by their parents or carers.
- Safety measures will be used as appropriate.

## 11.2 Managing Emergencies and Critical

**Incidents** · A first aid box will be on site.

- The person in charge will have access to the a mobile phone in case of emergencies.

## **12 Policy for Managing Accidents and Incidents**

Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC have developed a policy for dealing with any and all accidents and incidents within the service.

- We will ensure that all personnel are aware of emergency numbers and that they are prominently displayed.
- We will ensure that a First Aid Box is accessible.
- The safety and welfare of the child is always the first consideration if a child is injured or an accident occurs.
- After an accident, as soon as practicable, the Accident Report Form is completed and recorded in the Accident Log.
- The Chairperson is informed of all accidents and incidents.
- Parents are always informed of incidents or accidents involving their child and request to sign the relevant form.
- The committee will review the accident and incident reports annually.

## **13 Social Media Policy**

Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC and all sub-committees have a Facebook page which we use to inform people of any special events and to communicate relevant general information about the community. Our Facebook page also helps us to market our area or events and to provide information to people and to keep the community up to date on our progress, events and promotions.

- Members will never post pictures of any children where their face can be recognised if asked by the parent not to do so.
- Notices displaying that photos are being taken during an event will be displayed.
- It is the responsibility of individuals to notify committee members of there wishes for their photos NOT to be used for social media purposed.
- Images of children will never be posted with identifying information.

# **TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND HOW THEY MAY BE RECOGNISED**

*In this guidance, 'a child' means a person under the ages of 18 years, who is not or has not been married.*

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the parent/carer.

The definitions of neglect and abuse presented in this section are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

## Neglect

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, if you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí without delay. In this Guidance, 'a child' means a person under the age of 18 years, who is not or has not been married. 08 CHILDREN FIRST National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding

- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
  
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.



It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

## **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically 10 CHILDREN FIRST National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes: » Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means] » Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act » Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's

safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. Details on exemptions for mandated reporting of certain cases of underage consensual sexual activity can be found in Chapter 3 of this Guidance 2017.

## **WHAT ARE THE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF A MANDATED PERSON?**

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act, 2015. These are:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla;
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

**Section 14(1) of the Children First Act, 2015 states:**

‘...where a mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child–

(a) has been harmed,

(b) is being harmed, or

(c) is at risk of being harmed, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to the Agency.’

**Section 14(2) of the Children First Act, 2015 also places obligations on mandated persons to report any disclosures made by a child:**

‘Where a child believes that he or she—

(a) has been harmed,

(b) is being harmed, or

(c) is at risk of being harmed,

and discloses this belief to a mandated person in the course of a mandated person’s employment or profession as such a person, the mandated person shall, ... as soon as practicable, report that disclosure to the Agency.’

**Section 2 of the Children First Act, 2015 defines harm as follows:**

‘harm means in relation to a child—

(a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or,

(b) sexual abuse of the child.’

## **Reporting Mandated Concerns**

### **Criteria for reporting: definitions and thresholds**

As a mandated person, under the legislation you are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances. The four types of abuse are described in Chapter 2 of Children First: National Guidance 2017. The threshold of harm for each category of abuse at which mandated persons have a legal obligation to report concerns is outlined below.

If you are in doubt about whether your concern reaches the legal definition of harm for making a mandated report, Tusla can provide advice in this regard. You can find details of who to contact to discuss your concern on the Tusla website ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)). If your concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but you feel it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should report it to Tusla under Children First: National Guidance 2017.

## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is defined as ‘to deprive a child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care’. The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child’s needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the **child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE/ILL-TREATMENT**

Ill-treatment is defined as ‘to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated’. Emotional abuse is covered in the definition of ill-treatment used in the Children First Act, 2015.

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where **the child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is covered in the references to assault in the Children First Act, 2015. The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result **the child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

If, as a mandated person, you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then you must report this to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015.

Sexual abuse to be reported under the Children First Act, 2015 [as amended by section 55 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017] is defined as an offence against the child, as listed in Schedule 3 of the Children First Act, 2015.

A full list of relevant offences against the child which are considered sexual abuse is set out in Appendix 3 of Children First: National Guidance 2017.

As all sexual abuse falls within the category of **seriously affecting a child's health, welfare or development**, you must submit all concerns about sexual abuse as a mandated report to Tusla. There is one exception, which deals with certain consensual sexual activity between teenagers, which is outlined on p.23 of Children First: National Guidance 2017.

### **Disclosures of abuse from a child**

If, as a mandated person, you receive a disclosure of harm from a child, which is above the thresholds set out above, you must make a mandated report of the concern to Tusla. **You are not required to judge the truth of the claims or the credibility of the child.** If the concern does not meet the threshold to be reported as a mandated concern you should report it to Tusla as a reasonable concern under Children First: National Guidance 2017.

If you receive a disclosure of harm from a child, you may feel reluctant to report this for a number of reasons. For example, the child may say that they do not want the disclosure to be reported, or you may take the view that the child is now safe and that the involvement of Tusla may not be desired by either the child or their family. However, you need to inform Tusla of all risks to children above the threshold, as the removal of a risk to one child does not necessarily mean that there



are no other children at risk. The information contained in a disclosure may be critical to Tusla's assessment of risk to another child either now or in the future.

You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you ·

Do not promise to keep anything secret · Ask questions for clarification only.

- Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood ·

Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser

- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of Children First: National Guidance 2017 and legislation.

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## Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC

### Child Protection Concern

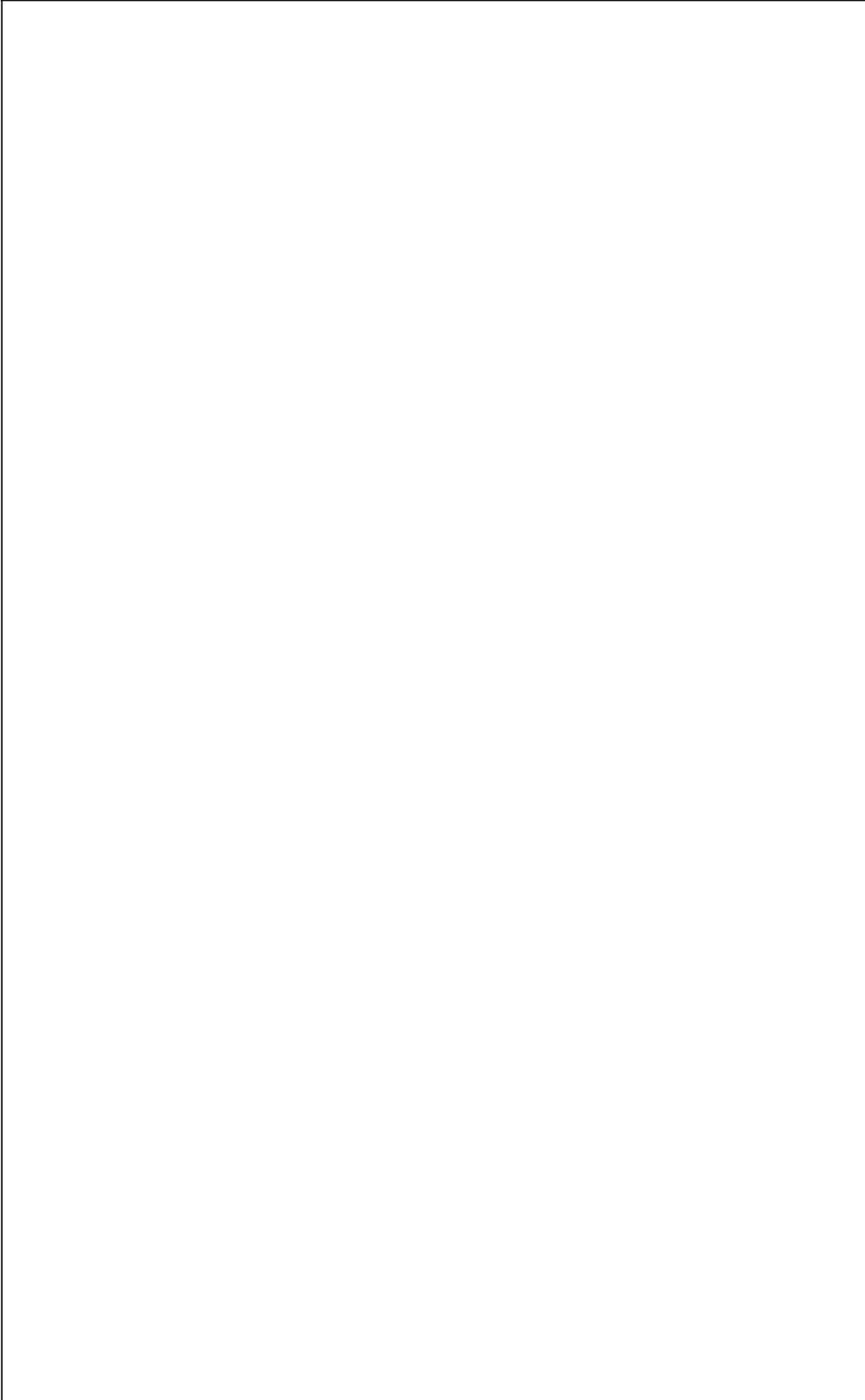
<b>Date</b>	<b>Child's Name</b>	<b>Summary of Concern – note where full details are stored.</b>	<b>Person who Raised the Concern</b>	<b>Action Taken and by Whom informal Consultations with TUSLA?</b>	<b>If a Referral was made to TUSLA – date and by whom.</b>

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## Ionad Cultúr/ ASHC

Date	Child's Name	Committee members Name & Signature	DLP Signature

**Detail of Concern, Accident or Incident**



**Action to be Taken...**