



**Shannow**  
Family Resource Centre

*The Cloisters, Abbeydorney*

*Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland.*

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**SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING  
POLICY & PROCEDURES**

**CHILDREN FIRST REQUIREMENTS FOR TUSLA-FUNDED ORGANISATIONS**

Tusla has a responsibility to ensure that funded organisations are aware of and have met their obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and National Children First Guidance.

When you complete the service level agreement you will be asked to respond to questions in relation to your Child Safeguarding Statement, risk assessment and safeguarding procedures. The Children First Information and Advice Service is linking with Tusla Commissioning, FRC Unit and Child Safeguarding Statement Unit to ensure that FRC’s receive support and training to understand these questions and to develop their Child Safeguarding Statement and procedures.

If at any time Tusla becomes concerned that practices in your organisation are not in line with Children First, you may be asked to address these issues with assistance. If there are serious concerns or there is a failure to address the issues highlighted funding arrangements may be affected.

**REVIEW HISTORY**

(Shannow Family Resource Centre (FRC) reviews its Child Safeguarding Guiding Principles, Policies, Procedures, and Child Safeguarding Statement, at least every two years (or sooner if there is an update or change in legislation or national guidance).

Review of the Family Resource Centre’s Child Safeguarding policies etc. is the responsibility of the Named Person\*, and ultimately the Voluntary Board of Directors.

This policy was first reviewed and approved on:   December 16, 2024  

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

And, then, reviewed by the Named Person on (sign and date):

_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____

\*Named person – a person appointed by an organisation to lead the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice as detailed in Tusla Child Safeguarding guide.

The Named Person can also be the Relevant Person and/or Designated Liaison Person—the unique responsibilities of each role must be clearly understood.

See ‘Key Roles in Safeguarding’.

## Sources

Content in this Family Resource Centre child safeguarding principles, policy and procedures document has been adopted from:

1. **Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)** “Children First National Guidance”
2. **Children First Act, 2015**
3. **Tusla (2018) Child Safeguarding: A guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2018)** “Child Safeguarding Guide” which includes six best practice themes.

For further information and guidance on any aspect of this document, please visit the Children First section on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

## GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

**Child Safeguarding** - ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by staff and volunteers to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, should these arise. Child safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential

**Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS)** – defined in the Children First Act 2015, this is a statement which includes a written assessment of risk of harm to children and the measures that will be taken to manage any identified risks.

**Guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures** – previously referred to as child protection and welfare policy and procedures, the procedures an organisation has in place to safeguard children from harm and reduce the risks to children of being harmed.

**Child or young person** – a person under the age of 18 years, who is not or has not been married.

**Child Protection and Welfare Report Form** – form for use in reporting suspected or alleged abuse or welfare concerns to Tusla. Available at - [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child\\_Protection\\_and\\_Welfare\\_Report\\_Form\\_FINAL.docx](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.docx)

**Child Safeguarding Guide** – Child Safeguarding: A guide for policy, procedure and practice  
[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, “National Guidance”** – national, overarching guidance for the protection and welfare of children, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The current version was published in 2017 [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** – a resource to any staff member who has a child protection concern. DLPs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies (see Children First National Guidance).

**Mandated Person** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report (i.e. mandatory reporting) concerns which meet or exceed a threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so

**Named Person** – a person appointed by an organisation to lead the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice as detailed in the Tusla Child Safeguarding Guide.

**Organisation** – any department/sector/body/agency/organisation whether private, public or voluntary

**Provider** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means, in relation to a relevant service, a person...

(a) who provides a relevant service, and

(b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service:

(i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service

(ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or

(iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service’.

**Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF)** – form for use in reporting to Tusla suspected or alleged retrospective abuse or welfare concerns, on adults who allege childhood abuse. Available at -

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Retrospective\\_Abuse\\_Report\\_Form\\_FINAL.docx](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Retrospective_Abuse_Report_Form_FINAL.docx) See Appendices for this policy.

**Relevant Person** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means a person who is appointed

by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement'.

**Relevant service** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, 'means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act]'.

**Tusla** – Tusla is Ireland's Child and Family Agency, the lead, statutory organisation for safeguarding children in Ireland.

**Worker and volunteer** – inter alia, any staff, volunteer, member of any board of management, student, contractor (that have access to children), engaged in an organisation to provide services to children or families

## POLICY STATEMENT

Shannow Family Resource Centre (FRC) has developed this Child Protection and Welfare policy in line with *The Children First Act (2015)*, *Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)* and *Our Duty to Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children/young people (2002)*. This policy has been developed based on the template provided by the Family Resource Centre (FRC) which was recommended to use by Tusla commissioning.

Shannow FRC is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all the children/young people with whom we engage. In this regard, Shannow FRC is also committed to working with all agencies, particularly statutory agencies, including Tusla.

### COMMITMENT TO LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Shannow Family Resource Centre (FRC) complies with legislation, guidance and best practice. All Tusla guidance documents can be downloaded from the Tusla website [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) Many of the guides are also available in Irish.

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION (See [www.irishstatutebook.ie](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie))

- Children First Act 2015
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Criminal Justice (withholding of information on offences against children and vulnerable persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Child Care Act 1991
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### TUSLA GUIDANCE

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns
- Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice
- Tusla Guidance on Writing a Child Safeguarding Statement
- Tusla Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes
- Tusla Children's Charter
- Tusla Signs of Safety Approach
- Tusla Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff.

### INSURANCE

The Family Resource Centre Voluntary Board of Directors and DLP should be familiar with the terms and conditions of the organisation's insurance policies—particularly any immediate notifications required by the insurance company if there is an incident or accident.

## **Insurance Policies Terms and Conditions**

Please refer to and be aware of the Terms and Conditions of the Insurance Policies held by your Organisation.

### **PURPOSE**

This policy sets out the roles, responsibilities, and procedures to ensure the effective management of child protection and welfare concerns in Shannow FRC. It is one, of several policies and procedures that Shannow FRC implements, that contributes to safeguarding children and young people. This policy should be used in conjunction with all other relevant Shannow FRC policies as necessary.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all staff in Shannow FRC, irrespective of whether their role is within the clinical or support services functions; therefore, it applies to all employees (permanent or sessional) volunteers, students, those on placements, contractors, and the Board of Management. It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure that they have read and fully understood this policy. Failure to adhere to this policy could result in disciplinary action. It is the responsibility of all contractors providing a service to Shannow FRC to read and fully understand this policy. If this policy is not fully complied with, all and any services provided by the contractor to Shannow FRC may be suspended. For this policy, a "child" means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENT

Ref: Chapter 4 'Responsibilities of Organisations Dealing with Children and Young People' Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

Ref: Best Practice Theme 1 in Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp.10-15

Shannow Family Resource Centre's ("the FRC") 'Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures' set out the requirements for working with children and young people in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and Children First National Guidance 2017. The Family Resource Centre's policies etc. are aligned with National Guidance.

The Family Resource Centre, as a provider of a relevant service, must:

- ✓ Undertake an **assessment of any potential for harm** to a child while availing of the service
- ✓ Prepare a written **child safeguarding statement** specifying the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a child, while availing of the service, is safe from harm
- ✓ **Appoint** a relevant person, named person, designated liaison officer
- ✓ **Keep a list of Mandated Persons in the FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE**

## DECLARATION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Shannow FRC, offers a range of services and activities for children in the centre and occasionally engage in youth participation projects in collaboration with schools. We are open Monday to Friday 9:30 to 5:30. This service is a community-based facility operated by a Voluntary Board of Management. We have one family support office, a hall that can accommodate up to 20 people, a smaller room for counselling or meetings of 2-3 people, a computer room and an outdoor garden which is fully fenced in. Here at Shannow Family Resource Centre we provide the services and activities for children/young people such as: day-time camps, arts, crafts, sewing, knitting, baking, yoga, counselling, family support, meitheals, and we provide space for play therapy in the centre.

Please read these guidance and support documents ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)) for more information:

- Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice

Protecting children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Shannow Family Resource Centre recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children, and we are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse. The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of community life and must be reflected in all of the centre's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, Shannow Family Resource Centre will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflects national policy and legislation, and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years.

Shannow Family Resource Centre will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of child and young person who attends our service is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- Fully comply with its statutory obligations under the children first act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- Develop a practice of openness with parents encourage parental involvement in the services of family resource centre;
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters;
- Respect all children and young people equally as individuals with an equal right to attend a service and encourage them to reach their potential regardless of background;
- We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our services, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.

Our guiding principles apply to everyone in Shannow FRC.

Workers and volunteers must conduct themselves according to the Family Resource Centre Code of Behaviour and Conduct, in a way that reflects the principles, ethos and values of our Family Resource Centre.

All Family Resource Centre workers and volunteers must seek training appropriate for their role. They must sign-up to the guiding principles at induction and abide by them.

It is the responsibility of the Named Person, Relevant Person, Designated Liaison Person to ensure all workers and volunteers communicate the principles to children, young people, parents, and guardians where appropriate.

## **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT (CSS) POLICY**

The Family Resource Centre, as a provider of a relevant service, must have an up-to-date Child Safeguarding Statement which specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

The Family Resource Centre assesses the potential harm to the children and young people using its service(s) by carrying out a risk assessment. This written risk assessment then informs Family Resource Centre's Child Safeguarding Statement. The Family Resource Centre CSS outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.

It is the responsibility of the Named Person to ensure:

- The CSS is displayed prominently in the Family Resource Centre
- A copy of the CSS is provided to all staff and volunteers
- A copy of the CSS is made available to parents/guardians, families etc. if requested
- The CSS is provided to Tusla if requested

The Children First Act 2015 defines a 'provider' as "a person—

(a) who provides a relevant service, and

(b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service—

(i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service,

(ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or

(iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service".

## KEY ROLES IN CHILD SAFEGUARDING

**Ref: Chapter 3 and 4, 'Mandated Persons', and 'Responsibilities of Organisations Dealing with Children and Young People' of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 2 in Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp.16-21**

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ALL STAFF

The welfare and protection of children is the responsibility of all Shannow FRC staff. Staff must support each other and work in partnership in the best interests of children and young people, as well as ensuring full compliance with the law and policies governing Children First guidance and legislation in Ireland. All staff must be aware of and understand their responsibilities in terms of Children First guidance, legislation and safeguarding policies.

Staff must ensure they:

- Have read, understand, and incorporate into practice:
  - This policy document,
  - Shannow FRC Child Safeguarding Statement
- Be familiar with and consult as necessary:
  - Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)
  - Relevant Tusla reporting guidance
- Complete the mandatory Tusla eLearning module 'An Introduction to Children First' every two years and attend additional training as appropriate to their role.
- Know if they are a Mandated Person under the Children First Act 2015 and be familiar with the role in this regard.
- Inform clients/ participants, and parents/guardians, about their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding children as relevant.
- Report and record child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Provide any necessary and proportionate assistance to support Tusla in their assessment of a child protection or welfare concern.

- Where a staff member has a concern regarding unsafe practices taking place within Shannow FRC, they should inform their line manager/clinical lead, or consider making a Protected Disclosure as soon as possible.
- All workers and volunteers must be informed at induction who holds which safeguarding role in the organisation
- The Family Resource Centre must keep a list of Mandated Persons in the organisation – this is held safely by the Designated Liaison Person
- The responsibilities of each role must be understood by the respective worker
- All workers and volunteers must receive appropriate training relevant to their responsibilities, so they know what to do and who to contact if they have a concern.

### **NAMED PERSON**

The role of Named Person, Relevant Person, and Designated Liaison Person (DLP) can be undertaken by the same person - there is no requirement to have different people for each role. The Manager of Shannow Family Resource Centre (FRC), our named person is: Kristy McFetridge until 31/12/2024 and then Marilyn Leneghan starting 4/2/2025.

The named person:

- Responsible for leading the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures
- Ensures policies and procedures are consistent with best practice
- Liaises with all key workers and volunteers who have relevant roles and responsibilities
- Assists with the review process.

### **DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)**

Shannow Family Resource Centre has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within the Family Resource Centre are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.

The Family Resource Centre has also appointed a Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) who will assume responsibility when the designated liaison person is not available or on leave or if they are directly involved in a concern or incident.

The name and contact details of the DLP and DDLDP must be known to all workers and volunteers within the Family Resource Centre, as well as parents and service users.

**Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is:**

\_ Kristy McFetridge until 31/12/2024 and then Marilyn Leneghan starting 4/2/2025. \_\_\_\_\_

**Our Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) is:**

Sarah Hayes, Family Support Worker

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**ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)/ DEPUTY DLP**

- Both the Designated Liaison Person and the deputy must be familiar with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, associated duties, Family Resource Centre guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures
- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) must participate and complete DLP training when available.
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from workers and volunteers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of the FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form or the Tusla portal.
- Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless:
  - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child or young person
  - Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family
  - The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to your attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate

- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, as appropriate
- *Where appropriate, make joint reports with Mandated Person/s in the FRC.*

**DLP's are appointed by their organisation to ensure that reporting procedures within Family Resource Centre are followed.**

## **MANDATED PERSONS**

The Children First Act, 2015, outlines who are Mandated Persons in Schedule 2.

The Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines the role of the DLP.

Mandated Persons are required by law, under the Children First Act 2015, to:

- (i) report harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla (i.e. mandatory reporting) and
- (ii) assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report (i.e. mandatory assisting)

The Chairperson / Line Manager for the post will inform the worker if they are a Mandated Person at induction. Workers who are Mandated Persons should be made aware of their responsibilities under the legislation.

## Guidance note from FRC National Forum:

Family Resource Centre's **may** or **may not** have Mandated Persons. When preparing a list of Mandated Persons the following areas should be considered:

1) Where there is an Early Years Service **notified to Tusla** under the Child Care Regulations. **All childcare workers in such services are Mandated Persons.**

(Children First Act 2015 - Schedule 2 Section 15 (j))

2) Section 18 of Schedule 2 of the Act also outlines that **someone carrying on a pre-school service is mandated**, this will be the person whose name is notified to Tusla on behalf of the Family Resource Centre, e.g. Chair of the Board of Management for the Family Resource Centre.)

3) If the Family Resource Centre is running **Youth services.**

- and there is a person responsible for the care or management of a youth work service (as per section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001). (Schedule 2 Section 15 (k))

- Where the Family Resource Centre employ youth workers who are professionally qualified and employed in a youth work services (as per Youth Work Act) (Schedule 2 Section 16 (a) & (b))

4) If the Family Resource Centre is running counselling services

-Where the Family Resource Centre employs a **"psychotherapist or a person providing counselling** who is registered with one of the voluntary bodies (Schedule 2 Section 15 (e))

5) If the Family Resource Centre employ **social care workers** who practice as such and are eligible for registration. (Schedule 2 Section 8)

6) Family Resource Centre **Co-ordinators/DLPs'** would only be listed as Mandated Persons if their profession or role is outlined on Schedule 2 of the Children First Act, 2015. Discussions have taken place in many FRC's as to whether Co-ordinators of an FRC's are Mandated Persons. In some centre's the Co-ordinator's job description indicates that they have a child safeguarding/child protection role as per 15 (i) in Schedule 2 i.e. (Safeguarding officer, child protection officer ...employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function.....)

Some FRC's therefore have included Co-ordinators on their Mandated Persons List.

Family Resource Centre Co-ordinators/DLP's may be both DLP and a Mandated Person if they are listed on Schedule 2 of the Act.

7) FRC's may also have **volunteers from the professions indicated on schedule 2** who are not fulfilling that function for the FRC as a volunteer. These persons would not be included on the Mandated Persons. However, where they are fulfilling that function as a volunteer for e.g. a "psychotherapist or person providing counselling who is registered with one of the voluntary professional bodies" they would be included on the Mandated Persons list.

8) FRC's should be aware that **volunteers** such as Gardaí, members of the clergy and foster parents are **in their role on a 24 hour basis**. If they are working or volunteering within your service they may need to be listed as Mandated Persons on your Mandated Persons list.

**It is possible that a Family Resource Centre may employ other classes of workers listed in the Children First Act, 2015, Schedule 2. A comprehensive overview of the activities each Family Resource Centre is involved with will help identify where there are workers who are listed on Schedule 2 as Mandated Persons.**

**\*It is important that Family Resource Centres familiarise themselves with all relevant legislation and take legal advice if necessary.**

### **MANDATED ASSISTING**

In essential circumstances, where it is determined to be in the best interests of the child, Mandated Persons can also be mandated to assist Tusla in their assessment of child protection and welfare concerns about children who have been the subject of a mandated report. A Mandated Person must comply with this request.

Mandated assistance may include a request to supply further information over the phone, produce a verbal or written report or attend a meeting.

Information that Tusla shares with another person in the course of carrying out an assessment must not be disclosed to a third party, unless Tusla considers it appropriate and authorises in writing that the information may be shared. Failure to comply with this provision is an offence under section 17 of the Children First Act 2015.

See Tusla's Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff which can be accessed at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

### **RELEVANT PERSON**

The Family Resource Centre has appointed a Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.

In Shannow Family Resource Centre, our relevant person is:

Kristy McFetridge until 31/12/2024 and then Marilyn Leneghan starting 4/2/2025.

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The relevant person is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement, and their name and contact details must be included in the Child Safeguarding Statement.

# RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE CONCERNS

**Ref: Chapter 1 and Chapter 5 ‘Dealing with Concerns about a Child – Tusla and An Garda Síochána’ of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 3 in Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp. 22-41**

**Ref: Tusla’s Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns, available on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).**

This section details the Family Resource Centre’s child protection and welfare reporting procedures, including the role of Mandated Persons; information sharing and record-keeping in relation to child protection and welfare concerns; confidentiality; responding to children who disclose abuse; responding to adult disclosures of childhood abuse; and the FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE’s procedures for responding to allegations of abuse against staff.

## RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT A CONCERN

- All child protection concerns should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person without delay. If the child is in immediate danger, call the police.
- The responsibility to report child protection or welfare concerns applies to everyone working with children or family members.
- Confidentiality should never be used as a reason not to report a child protection concern.
- The safety and wellbeing of the child takes priority over all other considerations. If you ignore what may be symptoms of abuse, it could result in ongoing harm to the child.

## IDENTIFYING HARM AND ABUSE

Please see Appendix 1 for categories, signs and indicators of child abuse and neglect. Children First National Guidance defines four categories of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Cyberbullying should also be considered. Please see Children First National Guidance for more information.

Children First Act 2015 defines “‘harm’ as, 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, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise”.

### **REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN**

You should always inform the DLP in the Family Resource Centre if you have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

It is not necessary for you to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern. All that is required is that you have reasonable grounds for concern. It is Tusla’s role to assess concerns that are reported to it. If you report a concern, you can be assured that your information will be carefully considered with any other information available and a child protection assessment will be carried out where enough risk is identified.

#### **Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:**

- Evidence, for example 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 or physical neglect.
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused.
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

#### **IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER / EMERGENCY SITUATION**

- **If you think the child is in immediate danger, you must contact An Garda Síochána (the police).**
- In an emergency, where you believe the child is at risk of immediate harm, you should contact the DLP first, failing that, contact local Tusla Social Work Duty Service without delay before making a written report.
- Mandated reporters can access Tusla's emergency out-of-hours social work service. If you

are a mandated reporter and wish to report a case of child harm to Tusla, you can contact out-of-hours social work service on 0818 776 315, 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk of harm if waiting for an intervention.
- If you are a Mandated Person, you must follow up with a mandated report to Tusla within three days of the emergency.

### **REPORTING A CONCERN (ALL FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS)**

- Regardless of how a concern comes to a worker or volunteer's attention, it must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person without delay.
- If a worker/volunteer receives information regarding a suspicion of child abuse from a third party this must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person who will then consult appropriately with Tusla Duty Social Work.
- If you are a Mandated Person who also holds the role of designated liaison person, you must fulfil your statutory obligations to report a concern as a Mandated Person.
- The Designated Liaison Person, in consultation with the worker/volunteer who has raised a concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist.
- If the DLP is unsure if a child protection concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern, they should contact Tusla Duty Social Work for informal advice and guidance.

**Number of Local Tusla Duty Social Work Team(s): 064 6678065 –**  
Child and Family Agency, Unit 7/8, Block 1, Reeks Gateway, Cleeney Roundabout Killarney, Co. Kerry, V93

**Number of Local Garda Station: Tralee Garda Station 066 7102300,**  
**Listowel Garda Station 068 50820** (Also in an emergency you can ring 999)

**For social work numbers in your area visit: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/>**

- Any query or concern in relation to children out of hours should be reported immediately to An Garda Síochána.
- The DLP will report child protection and welfare concerns by completing the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (CPWRF) which is available on the Tusla web-portal (see appendix 4). DLP's should register on the Tusla web Portal and make reports

electronically. For details on how to register see <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/> (For details of the CPWRF see Appendix 4)

- In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Tusla Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact the police, An Garda Síochána.
- If a concern relates to the DLP, reports should be made to the Chairperson.
- If a concern is about a worker or volunteer of Shannow Family Resource Centre, the procedure for addressing allegations of abuse against staff / volunteers should be followed.
- The Chairperson of the Voluntary Board of Directors may be informed when a report has been made by a DLP to Tusla. Information which identifies the child or family is only shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- The DLP will record factual details of the concern, the decisions and actions taken. These records will be held securely and confidentially.

#### **REPORTING IF YOU ARE A MANDATED PERSON**

- If you are a Mandated Person you must report a concern without delay. You may do this with the DLP in Shannow Family Resource Centre or independently of the DLP. Guidance for Mandated Persons on the thresholds at which, or above which, they have a statutory obligation to report the concern under the Children First Act 2015.
- As a Mandated Person, if you have concerns you have a legal obligation to make a report as below.

"...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 Tusla."

Also, Section 14(2) of the Children First Act 2015 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 Tusla.”

- **Mandatory reporting cannot be discharged by a DLP on your behalf. Mandated Persons can, however, make a joint report with a DLP.**
- Where a Mandated Person has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should consider whether the concern meets reasonable grounds for concern, and they should report the concern to their DLP.
- If the DLP does not wish to report to Tusla, you, as a Mandated Person, should proceed with making a report and inform the DLP that a report under the Children First Act 2015 has been made. The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 will apply in this instance. See Appendix 6 for an overview of this Act.
- If a child protection concern has come to the attention of several Mandated Persons, the report may be submitted jointly by them.
- Mandated Persons should inform the DLP in Shannow Family Resource Centre if they have made a report.

## **MAKING A MANDATED REPORT OUT OF HOURS**

Mandated reporters can now access Tusla's emergency out-of-hours social work service. If you are a mandated reporter and wish to report a case of child harm to Tusla, you can contact our out-of-hours social work service on 0818 776 315 between 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

If you cannot contact Tusla and have an immediate concern about the safety of a child, please contact An Garda Síochána.

## **IF A DLP DECIDES NOT TO REPORT A CONCERN**

If, as a designated liaison person, you decide not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded.
- The worker 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 worker 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 worker or volunteer who raised the concern should also be reassured that if they do choose to further pursue the matter, they are covered by the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

### **CAN I REPORT ANONYMOUSLY?**

Workers and Designated Liaison Persons cannot report anonymously. Similarly, Mandated Persons may not report anonymously as they are obliged to report by law.

### **RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD**

You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally.

The following approach is suggested as best practice for responding to a disclosure.

Where a child/young person discloses abuse, the reporting procedure should be followed.

N.B. Think before you promise anything – do not make promises you cannot keep.

- 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
- Avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser

#### **At the earliest possible opportunity:**

- Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child/young person has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child/young person
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Inform the DLP immediately per reporting procedures
- Treat the information confidentially

Things to say	Things not to say
I want to listen to what you have to say	Wait until I get my manager, so you can tell them too?
I am going to do my best to help you	I can't do anything
You did the right thing by telling me, this is what I am going to do next ...	I can't believe it, I'm shocked
You are not to blame	This is your fault
Is there anything else you want to share?	Don't tell me any more

## **RETROSPECTIVE ABUSE: RESPONDING TO ADULTS WHO DISCLOSE CHILDHOOD**

### **ABUSE**

- The requirement to report retrospective concerns should be made explicit to the client, prior to commencement of work, for example in a therapy or counselling contract.
- If a worker/volunteer receives a disclosure from a client or service user that they were abused as a child (i.e. a disclosure of retrospective abuse), you must report this information to Tusla using a Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF) as there may be a current or potential risk to children from the person against whom there is an allegation.
- If you are unsure about whether to report or not, consult with your DLP or the Tusla Duty Social Work.
- Guidelines for completing a RARF can be found in Appendix 5, and on the Tusla website: [www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/](http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/)

## **TALKING TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION OR WELFARE**

### **CONCERNS**

- It is usually good practice to tell the most appropriate parent/guardian in the family that you are making a report.
- This means that the family is fully informed about the services they are being referred to and understand what information professionals are passing on and why. However, there are some exceptions to informing the family (see below).
- You do not need to tell the family that a report is being made, if:
  - By doing so, the child will be placed at further risk
  - Where the family knowing about the report could affect Tusla's ability to carry out a risk

- assessment
- You believe that doing so would place you at risk of harm from the family.

## **PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF / VOLUNTEERS**

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person.
- Behaved towards a child/young person or children/young people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/young person.

Shannow Family Resource Centre has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the worker/volunteer. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

**1. The Designated Liaison Person will deal with the child welfare or protection concern procedure**

Note: Where an allegation of abuse is made against the Designated Liaison Person, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person will deal with the concern.

**2. A member of the Voluntary Board of Directors (Employer), ideally a member of the Staffing Sub-group and / or the Chairperson, will deal with the allegation against the staff member / volunteer i.e. will deal with the employment aspect.**

- Legal and/or HR advice should be sought by the Board if in doubt.
- The same person should not have responsibility for dealing with the child protection reporting procedure and the employment/contractual issues.
- If an allegation is made against a worker/volunteer, SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with:
  - Shannow Family Resource Centre's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures
  - the rules of natural justice
  - relevant employment law.

## PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

First priority is for the safety of the child/young person; the Chairperson and / or DLP must ensure no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk. SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE will put in place necessary protective measures. This is not a presumption of guilt.

### Child welfare or protection concern

- If an allegation against a worker or volunteer is received, it will be dealt with promptly and strictly in accordance with agreed reporting procedures to the DLP
- The DLP will alert the Chairperson and/or member of Staff Liaison Sub-group that a concern has been raised
- The decision to make a formal report will be based on reasonable grounds for concern
- The DLP will consult with Tusla Duty Social Worker and complete the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form as required
- Parents/guardians should be informed of any action planned while having regard to the confidentiality and safety of all concerned including the worker / volunteer.

### Employment

- Once alerted by the DLP of an allegation, the Chairperson will privately inform the worker/volunteer who the allegation is against of (1) the fact that an allegation has been made against them and (2) the nature of the allegation
- SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE will ensure that the principles of 'natural justice' apply throughout the process
- All stages of the process must be recorded
- The worker/volunteer should be offered the option to have representation
- The worker/volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the allegation and should be informed that any response will be noted in any subsequent report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána
- An investigation will take place into the allegation(s) as soon as possible and in accordance with SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE's disciplinary and grievance procedures
- SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE will ensure that no other children or young people are put at risk during this period. This may include any of the following:
  - suspension of duties pending the outcome of an investigation
  - re-assignment of duties that do not involve children and young people
  - working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation
- SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE will inform

	<p>the person against whom the allegation has been made of the outcome of the investigation as quickly as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE will work in consultation with Tusla and An Garda Síochána on what action(s) should be taken.</li> </ul>
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## **PROTECTED DISCLOSURES 'WHISTLEBLOWING'**

Workers/volunteers in Shannow Family Resource Centre are made aware of the appropriate authorities outside the Family Resource Centre to whom they should report if they are inhibited, for any reason, in reporting an incident internally or where they are dissatisfied with the internal response. Please see the Family Resource Centre's policy on Protected Disclosures.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORD-KEEPING AND SHARING INFORMATION**

Shannow Family Resource Centre is committed to peoples' rights to data protection and confidentiality. However, in relation to child safeguarding Shannow Family Resource Centre undertakes that:

- Information in relation to child safeguarding will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis within the Family Resource Centre and will always be in the best interest of the child.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with children/young people and families and in adult services should make this clear to parents/guardians and to the child/young person.
- Shannow Family Resource Centre will co-operate with Tusla on proportionate sharing of records where a child welfare or protection concern arises. See Tusla's Mandated Assisting Protocol.
- Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- Records will be kept securely indefinitely.
- Records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures are kept securely and safely within the Family Resource Centre by the DLP per data protection policies.
- Access to these records will be managed by the Designated Liaison Person or person delegated and the Chairperson.

## **WORKING SAFELY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Ref: Chapter 4 'Responsibilities of Organisations Dealing with Children and Young People' of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 4 in Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp. 42-62**

### **SAFE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Shannow Family Resource Centre will ensure best practice in the recruitment of staff and volunteers.

### **APPLICATION FORM AND ADVERTISING**

An application form must be filled out or CV given for all positions in Shannow Family Resource Centre, whether the position is paid or on a voluntary basis. For volunteers, the Application Form is combined with a Declaration Form (see Appendix 8 and 9 for sample forms for volunteers). Advertising for positions, paid and voluntary will be done as widely as possible and in a fair, open and transparent manner.

### **GARDA VETTING**

Shannow Family Resource Centre will ensure that it fully complies with all the requirements of this legislation. Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone (whether paid or unpaid) who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. Family Resource Centres should contact the FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE Garda Vetting Officer in Ballymote FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (071 9197818) for further details.

All prospective candidates consent to Garda Vetting if they successfully move to the conditional stage of offer. The process of Garda Vetting a successful candidate must be completed prior to that person commencing work with the organisation.

### **SELECTION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two or more representatives through an interview process. Volunteers with Shannow Family Resource Centre will also be required to go through an informal interview process with the Centre Manager and/or a member of the Voluntary Board of Directors. Any person that is deemed to constitute a risk to children or young people will not be engaged / employed.

Some of the exclusions include:

- Any child abuse related convictions.
- Refusal to sign the application and / or declaration form.
- Insufficient documentary evidence of identity.
- Concealing information on one's suitability for working with children.

## **ID AND REFERENCES**

Two forms of identification, including one form of photo I.D. with a signature (e.g. passport or driving licence) must be provided by staff and volunteers. Contact details for two referees, who are not family members, must be provided. References will be sought in writing or by telephone and will be followed up by telephone or personal visit as appropriate.

## **SIGN-OFF**

All appointments must be approved by the Voluntary Board of Directors, not by any individual member of Shannow Family Resource Centre. Tusla must be informed of appointments funded by it.

## **INDUCTION**

- New staff and volunteers in Shannow Family Resource Centre must undertake an induction process that includes information on the policies and procedures of the Centre particularly this child safeguarding policy.
- All volunteers and staff that work with the Family Resource Centre are required to sign and abide by child safeguarding policy and procedures.
- All staff members and volunteers will be provided with clear job descriptions that outline their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff who are Mandated Persons will be informed of this by the Relevant Person.
- If the volunteers or staff members are external to the Centre, then it will be agreed beforehand with their respective employer or Line Manager what policies and procedures they will be governed by as well as the level of responsibility both organisations have in implementing the placement agreement.
- Appropriate induction will be an integral part of each agreement.
- Where the Family Resource Centre is managing an activity / programme in the Centre in partnership with another organisation (or organisations), an agreement will be drawn up and agreed with the relevant organisation(s).
- This agreement will include procedures for the safe management of staff and volunteers

for the particular co-managed activity / programme.

## **PROBATION**

Staff and volunteers will complete a probationary / trial period of at least three months. During this time, their interaction with children and young people and their willingness to abide by, and actively implement, child safeguarding policy and procedures will be assessed by their Line Manager.

## **SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

- The frequency of supervision sessions will depend on whether the employee is just starting the job or has been with the Centre long term and on other factors:
  - During an initial induction period (first two/three weeks) there may be frequent informal check-ins and meetings;
  - During the probationary period formal support and supervision meetings may start out every week, move to every 2 weeks and then onto monthly;
  - Depending on how the worker is progressing;
  - For longer-term employees informal support and supervision may take place weekly or fortnightly. Formal support and supervision meetings are provided at least once every quarter or as deemed necessary.
  - The Manager and/or Line Manager of Shannow Family Resource Centre will provides support and supervision for the Family Support Worker at least once every six weeks.
- All staff members have access to the Staff Liaison on the Voluntary Board of Directors when needed.
- Staff team meetings are held monthly and volunteers are invited to attend as appropriate.
- Staff appraisal meetings take place annually and / or in line with the terms of staff contracts and are overseen by the Manager and Voluntary Board of Directors. Child protection and the promotion of child welfare will be addressed during the appraisal meeting.
- Volunteers are supported and supervised by the Manager/ Line Manager.
- Volunteers will be facilitated to meet at least annually, or more often as required, to review their performance and discuss any emerging issues.
- Appropriate support and supervision structures for staff / volunteers from an external organisation can form part of their placement agreement when approved by Voluntary Board of Directors.
- The Terms of Reference for all working groups / sub-groups of the Voluntary Board of Directors should include a reference to the need to abide by this child safeguarding policy.

## **CHILD SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

- Shannow Family Resource Centre will assess its child safeguarding training needs on a regular basis and seek to provide training on Children First relevant to the role of the worker or volunteer in Shannow Family Resource Centre (see Appendix 3) Shannow Family Resource Centre Management is responsible for ensuring that all relevant workers and volunteers are trained in the recognition of the signs of abuse, understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and know the procedures to follow.

### **Training Resources**

- Universal e-learning training programme called 'Introduction to Children First' developed by Tusla, Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and HSE.
- Tusla's Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes.
- Tusla Children First Information and Advice Officers are available to liaise with voluntary and community organisations and provide advice and guidance on Children First. They can also help with any queries about child protection and welfare training. Contact details for your local Children First Information and Advice Officer can be found on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

### **Training Records**

Shannow Family Resource Centre will keep a log of what safeguarding training workers and volunteers have received. This log is maintained by the Named Person / Designated Liaison Person and records the following details:

- Date and name of training programmes delivered
- Names of worker/volunteers who attended and their position within the organisation
- Details of workers/volunteers who did not receive training but need to complete it
- Number of workers/volunteers trained
- Training programmes completed by each worker/volunteer (e.g. induction into the organisation's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures, child safeguarding training, DLP training, etc.)
- The names of the trainers who delivered the programme and the organisation
- A signed receipt of all workers/volunteers who have been given a copy of the organisation's declaration of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures (can be done at induction or in-house training).

## **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP (EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS)**

- When using facilities or services provided by another organisation, Shannow Family Resource Centre workers / volunteers will clarify and agree which organisation's reporting procedures for child protection or welfare concerns will be followed.
- Shannow Family Resource Centre will clarify the nature of its relationship with the other organisation immediately – particularly in relation to management of staff and volunteers and agreement of the required policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment where the welfare of the child is paramount. The 'Working in Partnership' checklist, (based on child safeguarding best practice themes) in Appendix 7, can be used to facilitate this agreement.
- Where students, scheme participants or people on work placements are engaged by Shannow Family Resource Centre, the Designated Liaison Person will explore with their Employer / Line Manager child safeguarding policies and procedures that the organisation operates under and will agree who has responsibility for addressing any child protection or welfare issue that might arise.
- Codes of Behaviour will be discussed to identify any variances in work practices and to agree a shared approach as part of the placement agreement.
- Complaints procedures / how to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour will also be part of this discussion and both organisations will have agreed procedures in place regarding information sharing, should such issues arise.
- Where Shannow Family Resource Centre is co-managing an activity / programme in the Family Resource Centre, an agreement will be made with the other organisation(s). The agreement will stipulate the agreed policies and procedures that are required to ensure the safe management of the activity / programme and will identify the Designated Liaison Person to lead any child protection or welfare concern that may arise.
- Information sharing / record keeping protocols will also be agreed in relation to each procedure outlined in the agreement.

## **FRC'S WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS.**

- When using facilities or services provided by another organisation, Shannow Family Resource Centre workers / volunteers will clarify and agree which organisation's reporting procedures for child protection or welfare concerns will be followed.
- Shannow Family Resource Centre will clarify the nature of its relationship with the other organisation immediately – particularly in relation to management of staff and volunteers and agreement of the required policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment where

the welfare of the child is paramount. The 'Working in Partnership' checklist, (based on child safeguarding best practice themes) in Appendix 7, can be used to facilitate this agreement.

- Where students, scheme participants or people on work placements are engaged by Shannow Family Resource Centre, the Designated Liaison Person will explore with their Employer / Line Manager child safeguarding policies and procedures that the organisation operates under and will agree who has responsibility for addressing any child protection or welfare issue that might arise.
- Codes of Behaviour will be discussed to identify any variances in work practices and to agree a shared approach as part of the placement agreement.
- Complaints procedures / how to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour will also be part of this discussion and both organisations will have agreed procedures in place regarding information sharing, should such issues arise.
- Where Shannow Family Resource Centre is co-managing an activity / programme in the Family Resource Centre, an agreement will be made with the other organisation(s). The agreement will stipulate the agreed policies and procedures that are required to ensure the safe management of the activity / programme and will identify the Designated Liaison Person to lead any child protection or welfare concern that may arise.
- Information sharing / record keeping protocols will also be agreed in relation to each procedure outlined in the agreement.

### **EXTERNAL GROUPS / ORGANISATIONS RENTING A SPACE / ROOM IN YOUR FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE**

If the external group is using your facilities outside the hours your service operates (for example: your service operates 9.30am to 5.30pm and the external group is using your facilities after 5.30pm) you should ensure, where applicable:

- That the external organisation understands that they are fully responsible for managing their own activities
- They have appropriate insurance cover and have provided copy of same.
- That the external group is aware of Children First and has appropriate policies in place (if applicable).

- That the external group has informed parents/guardians of their agreement with your service and that there is a clear distinction between the two services (if applicable).

If the external group is using your facilities during the hours that your service operates you should ensure, where applicable:

- That you include this factor when carrying out a risk assessment of harm that may occur to the children availing of your service (if you are a provider of a relevant service under the *Children First Act, 2015*) when an external group is also using the facilities;
- That you have adequate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children availing of your service when an external group is also using the facilities;
- The group is aware of your guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures;
- The group has appropriate insurance cover;
- The group is aware of your organisation's principles and values;
- The group is aware of Children First and has confirmed that they have appropriate policies in place;
- There is a signed agreement between the two parties.

**If the group is delivering a service to children and families in partnership with your organisation, then it is essential that governance issues are clarified and agreed prior to the service commencing.**

### **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Shannow Family Resource Centre is committed to providing equal opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their gender, age, culture, disability, religious beliefs, family status, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community.

Shannow Family Resource Centre promotes a child centred-approach to creating a safe environment for children and young people. Staff and volunteers are provided with clear good practice guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour when working with children and young people.

Worker and volunteers in this Family Resource Centre have a responsibility to promote children's rights.

### **WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL:**

- Create a safe, inclusive, accessible environment
- Treat children and young people with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Listen to and value children's opinions and beliefs
- Make sure that children know the Family Resource Centre's rules about behaviour
- Include children in appropriate decision making
- Help children to be safe, happy and have as much fun as possible
- Enable children to regard their bodies as their own property
- Give written information about the Family Resource Centre to children and their parents / carers
- Know about the principles and practices of child safeguarding, data protection, including their legal duties
- Respect children's privacy in bathrooms and in changing rooms
- Sensitively ensure that children know about the child safeguarding policy
- Always responding to complaints or allegations
- Help children realise the difference between confidentiality and secrecy
- Use encouragement to positively develop confidence and self-esteem
- Be sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs
- Facilitate the young people to draw up an Code of Behaviour/Rules that includes covers anti-bullying that will be followed while they are in the Centre or involved in any activities with SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE. Cyberbullying should also be discussed.

**Guidance Note:** *This is not an exhaustive list and needs to be tailored to each Family Resource Centre depending on their services.*

### **WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT:**

- Bully children
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. Meetings with individual children or young people will take place as openly as possible

- Shout at or show aggression towards children
- Subject children to any form of verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Will not engage in sexually provocative games or making suggestive comments, even in fun
- Exclude children from groups or activities because of difference
- Favour one child or children over others
- Have inappropriate physical contact with children
- Tell jokes of a racist, sexual or derogatory nature
- Refuse to act on a child welfare concern about someone in their care
- Engage in slagging or joking that belittles children.

**Guidance Note:** *This is not an exhaustive list and needs to be tailored to each Family Resource Centre depending on their services.*

### **SAFE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

- Shannow Family Resource Centre will minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to children and young people by ensuring that its facilities are fit-for-purpose, and in compliance with health and safety regulations before planning and running activities.
- Shannow Family Resource Centre will keep an appropriate record of participants when running activities including emergency contact telephone number, address, individual needs, and medical conditions (if disclosed and relevant).
- Shannow Family Resource Centre will keep up-to-date records of attendance, accidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly, and any unusual patterns reported to senior management), incidents, consent forms, any complaints or grievances.

Shannow Family Resource Centre workers/volunteers will consider the following if organising activities and events:

- Appropriate transport arrangements will be made for all activities
- Activities will be age appropriate
- Registration forms, parental consent forms etc. will be provided as required
- Incident, and accident report forms, safety procedures will be used to ensure the safety and

protection of children and young people

- There is insurance, and insurance companies are notified immediately if there is an incident or accident
- Clear lines of communication between organisers and parents/guardians regarding attendance, location, drop-off and pick-up, duration of activities will be agreed.

### **SAFE SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Children/young people are less likely to experience accidents or incidents if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised to maximise participation, fun and learning in a way that minimises risk.

Ensure that:

- A work schedule is displayed so that everyone knows who is on duty or volunteering in an activity;
- Children/young people are not left unattended;
- Adequate numbers of workers/volunteers are available to supervise the activities (note: best practice would indicate that there are male and female workers/volunteers present to supervise coeducational activities if possible);
- Workers/volunteers always know where children/young people are and what they are doing;
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision;
- Dangerous behaviour is never allowed.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

- Physical contact will be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.
- Physical contact should always be with the child's permission – resistance from the child will be respected.
- Breasts, buttocks and groin should always be avoided.
- Physical contact should be open and not secretive.
- Any physical contact should be governed by the developmental stage of the child.
- Tasks of a personal nature will only be undertaken with the utmost of discretion in an

emergency; for very young children or disabled children and always with the full understanding and consent of the parents.

## **ONLINE SAFETY**

Comprehensive procedures will be put in place to minimise the risk to children and young people from inappropriate use of the internet, social media, photographic and digital recording devices by staff/volunteers and young people involved in FRC activities. (see appendices 16)

## **ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

Shannow Family Resource Centre has a Health and Safety Statement in line with Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2015 that includes a risk assessment of each area of operation. Procedures to follow in the event of an accident or incident are below. Incidents must be recorded separately to an accident. See Appendix 10 and 11 for sample forms.

## **PROCEDURES**

- All accidents in the Family Resource Centre must be reported to the Health and Safety officer (manager of centre unless other staff person or Board member is assigned) who has participated in First Aid training / refresher training in the previous two years.
- All accidents and incidents must be recorded using the Centre's respective Incident Report Form and Accident Report Form.
- If a child has an accident, the primary carers are always informed of the nature of the accident and any treatment given.
- The location of the First-aid boxes is known to all staff members / volunteers and they are checked and re-stocked regularly.
- Children and young people are advised of any possible health and safety risks when participating in any activities / programmes in the Centre.
- Where trips are made 'off site', requirements in relation to having staff/volunteers trained in first aid will be an integral part of planning.
- Trips away must be planned for, and managed. See 4.3.9 'Managing trips away If the activities involve use of off-site facilities' in the Tusla Child Safeguarding Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) (See Appendices 14)
- External organisations that the Family Resource Centre works with are obliged to provide proof that they have adequate public liability insurance.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

All workers and volunteers must be aware of, and familiar with SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE's Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

# SHARING OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES, CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT, CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES INVOLVING PARENTS, CARERS, FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ref: Best Practice Theme 5 in Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp. 63-71

## SHARING OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Parents/guardians, children and young people should be made aware of the Family Resource Centre's guiding principles, child safeguarding procedures, and Child Safeguarding Statement on initial contact with Shannow Family Resource Centre.
- Codes of Behaviour, Code of Conducts, including Shannow Family Resource Centre's anti-bullying policy will be communicated to all.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Children and young people are made aware of their right to be protected, consulted and treated with respect.
- When communicating with parents/guardians, families, children and young people, workers and volunteers should be mindful of possible literacy issues, language barriers and communication differences.
- Workers and volunteers should encourage the active participation of children and young people in decision making in a manner which is appropriate to their age.
- Family Resource Centre workers and volunteers will check that children/young people understand that they are free to approach any worker/volunteer if they are worried about something.
- Children will be unconditionally respected and will be heard, listened to and taken seriously in the Centre.
- Children will be appropriately consulted on the development of codes and policies including anti-bullying.
- Where possible and depending on resources, age appropriate workshops will be facilitated to maximise their participation.
- Family Resource Centre workers and volunteers will seek feedback from parents/guardians informally and via formal review and evaluation.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Children's rights and entitlements will be widely communicated within Shannow Family Resource Centre using posters and age appropriate information leaflets, including information on the Family Resource Centre's child safeguarding principles and procedures.

Shannow Family Resource Centre notice board can be used to display:

- The name of the Designated Liaison Person, and Deputy;
- Communications Policy;
- Family Resource Centre Equality Statement and Safeguarding Statement (if the display board is in a prominent place);
- How to access the Family Resource Centre Complaints Policy;
- Details of any information evenings/workshops for parents/guardians on diversity, equality and anti-discrimination issues, etc.

Shannow Family Resource Centre will work closely in partnership with parents / carers and other agencies / support services that are working with the individual child.

Shannow Family Resource Centre will engage a variety of communication tools when working with children that have communication difficulties.

### **COMMUNICATION/ONLINE POLICY**

- Registration forms for children/young people evidence that parents/guardians have been informed of the Family Resource Centre Child Safeguarding Statement.
- All communication, including electronic email and text, between staff, volunteers and children will be appropriate and will only be done with parental/guardian's consent.
- Communications will not contain inappropriate images or text that might be construed as pornographic, racist, derogatory or contain innuendo or material that in any way might be inappropriate or offensive.
- Young people will not be contacted by Shannow Family Resource Centre through social media.
- Photographs, video or other images of children or young people will not be taken without the freely given consent of the young person and the parents / guardians / carers.
- Parents / guardians should be advised prior to a social event to be mindful of seeking consent to take photos, record footage of other attendants and children at Family Resource Centre events etc.
- Use of, and retention of photographs will be in line with the Family Resource Centre's data protection policy and procedures including any processing of children's data. Please see Appendix 13 for a sample consent form.

### **GUARDIANSHIP**

Shannow Family Resource Centre workers and volunteers will establish who has guardianship rights for a child where appropriate. Please see Appendix 11 on Guardianship.

### **SHARING INFORMATION WITH PRIMARY CARERS**

Primary carers are encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the work of Shannow Family Resource Centre and is committed to keeping them informed of all aspects of the

activity / programme that their child is involved in.

A copy of Shannow Family Resource Centre's child safeguarding policy and procedures is available to all primary carers.

In the event of a child welfare and protection concern arising, the practice in Shannow Family Resource Centre is to inform primary carers immediately unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

If Shannow Family Resource Centre has concerns about the welfare of any child or young person, the Family Resource Centre will:

- Respond to the needs of the child and ensure that the interests of the child are paramount;
- Inform the primary carers unless it is thought that this action would put the child at further risk;
- Encourage the primary carers to work in partnership with Shannow Family Resource Centre and ensure that they have an opportunity to consult with the Designated Liaison Person;
- Liaise with Tusla and/ or An Garda Síochána as appropriate;
- If there is a complaint against a member of staff or a volunteer, Shannow Family Resource Centre will immediately take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child and inform the primary carers as appropriate.



## COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Shannow Family Resource Centre promotes best practice and always welcomes feedback. We encourage people to address their comments / concerns to us as soon as possible as this will facilitate us to address the matter most effectively.

- If the complaint relates to the safety and welfare of a child, it will be dealt with in accordance with this child safeguarding procedures and the employee handbook.
- All comments or complaints will be treated properly, fairly and impartially.
- Informal comments or complaints could initially be addressed to the person(s) in question, if appropriate.
- Alternatively, the Manager of Shannow Family Resource Centre can be contacted. They will be responsible for directing the complaints / comments to the appropriate person.
- Where a complainant feels that their comment / complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily through the informal process outlined above, the comment / complaint should be put on a formal basis following the SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE Complaints Procedures. Where possible formal complaints / comments should be made in writing.
- The Chairperson will acknowledge the complaint, in writing, within 10 working days. The Board will do their best to resolve the matter as soon as possible. Where the matter cannot be resolved, the Board will investigate the matter and issue a complaint investigation report within 30 working days.
- In the event that the investigation cannot be concluded within 30 working days, the Chairperson will write to the complainant, explaining the reason for the delay. The Chairperson will provide the complainant with an update, in writing, every 20 working days thereafter.

***If the matter cannot be resolved with the Family Resource Centre through their complaints procedure, the complainant can seek a review of the outcome/recommendation through emailing: [tellus@tusla.ie](mailto:tellus@tusla.ie)  
The complainant must make their request for a review within 30 working days of receiving the complaint investigation report (in exceptional circumstances the complaint review officer may decide to extend this timeframe).***



## PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING A RELEVANT PERSON

### PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING A RELEVANT PERSON/S FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT, 2015

The Children First Act 2015, Section 11 requires organisations that are providers of Relevant Services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Section 11, (3) (g) of the Act requires that *'A child safeguarding statement shall... in that regard, specify the procedures that are in place' for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of this Part.*

Part 2 (8) of the Act outlines the definition in relation to *"Relevant Person" which means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.*

**Shannow Family Resource Centre, as an organisation we have a responsibility to appoint a Relevant Person/s in line with the above Act.**

#### **Purpose of this procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

1. Meet the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015, by outlining in the Child Safeguarding Statement/s the specified procedures required, which include a "procedure for the appointment of Relevant Person/s.
2. Ensure that all staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the process to appoint the Relevant Person/s.
3. Ensure all staff/volunteers are aware of who has been appointed as the Relevant Person/s as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
4. Ensure that all parents, children, members of the public and Tusla are aware that they may receive a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement upon request. This statement will contain the details of the Relevant Person/s.

#### **Roles associated with this procedure**

1. The Shannow Family Resource Centre, Manager and Board of Management, has responsibility for appointing a Relevant Person/s.



2. The appointed Relevant Person/s in line with the Children First Act, 2015 will be the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.
3. Management and Staff/volunteers will ensure that any queries in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement are directed to the Relevant Person/s named.

### **Outline of Procedure**

The procedure to appoint a Relevant Person/s is as follows.

1. The Shannow Family Resource Centre, Manager/ Chair of Board of Management, may decide to be the named Relevant Person/s for the purpose of the Child Safeguarding Statement.
2. The Shannow Family Resource Centre, Manager/ Chair of Board of Management, may appoint the Relevant Person/s and delegate the function to a nominated person in the organisation.
3. If appointed, the role and function of the Relevant Person/s will be outlined in a letter to the nominated person.
4. The name of the Relevant Person/s will be included on the Child Safeguarding Statement.
5. All staff/volunteers will be made aware of who has been appointed as the Relevant Person/s by receiving a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement which includes the name of the Relevant Person/s. All parents, children, members of the public and Tusla will also receive a copy of the statement upon request which will inform them of who has been appointed as a Relevant Person/s.
6. This procedure and the role and function of the Relevant Person/s will be reviewed within 24 months of the date and outlined on the Child Safeguarding Statement, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.



## PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINING A LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS

### PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINING A LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS

The Children First Act 2015, Section 11 requires organisations that are providers of Relevant Services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Section 11, (3) of the Act requires that 'A child safeguarding statement shall... in that regard, specify the procedures that are in place' for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.

**Shannow Family Resource Centre, as an organisation we have a responsibility to maintain a list of mandated persons in line with the above Act.**

#### **Purpose of this procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

1. Meet the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015, by putting in place a procedure for maintaining a list of persons who are mandated persons as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Act.

**(Note: If your staff/volunteers role or qualification are not specifically named in schedule 2. they are not mandated persons and would not be listed)**

2. Ensure that all management, staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons.
3. Ensure that all management and staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the responsibilities of Mandated Persons

#### **Role of the Mandated Persons**

As defined in the Children First Act 2015, Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach or exceed a particular threshold to the local Tusla social work duty service and to cooperate in the assessment of mandated reports (please see Children First: National Guidance (2017) Chapter 3, for further information on the roles of mandated persons and Appendix 2: Schedule of Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015 a copy of which is available as an Appendix in this procedure).



## **Outline of procedure**

### **Employers**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management and the Manager to identify persons in positions that could be characterised as Mandated Persons with responsibility under Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015. Those staff members will be advised of their responsibility as Mandated Persons by letter, and a copy of the letter sent will be held on their personnel file. Line Managers of all staff who are identified as Mandated Persons will also be informed of their status by letter. The manager will hold a full list of the employees who were sent letters in this regard.

### **Line Managers**

Line Managers of identified Mandated Persons will inform new and existing staff of their Mandated Person responsibility and this should be discussed within Supervision.

- Managers must ensure that employees who are Mandated Persons meet their responsibilities and comply with these procedures through monitoring, audit and review
- Managers must facilitate training for employees who are Mandated Persons where necessary
- Managers are responsible for consulting with staff to review the Mandated Persons list to remove persons who are not identified as Mandated Persons. They must inform Board of Management of any changes required to the list.

It is the Line manager's responsibility to ensure that all information, induction and training necessary for staff members who are Mandated Persons is undertaken with particular reference to the reporting procedure.

### **Staff (and or volunteers)**

- Staff who are Mandated Persons when fulfilling their legal responsibility should ensure their line manager/Designated Liaison Person is aware when they are making a report.
- Those who were graded as Mandated Persons but self-determined they did not meet the criteria as Mandated Person are advised to inform their line management.

### **Arrangements to notify staff of their Mandated Person Responsibility**

Employment contracts for all staff will indicate that they must adhere to all relevant legislation. This includes the Children First Act. The following will be included in all existing and new employee contracts. 'You are required to comply with legislation / policies which have particular application to your position. Details of these policies will be communicated to you by your Line manager'.



**Maintenance and Production of a List of Mandated Persons**

A list of Mandated Persons will be maintained. The manager will maintain a the organisational list of Mandated Persons.

**Review**

All arrangements for maintaining a list/s of mandated persons outlined in this procedure will be reviewed within 24 months of the date outlined below or if there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

**SHANNOW FRC LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ROLE IN FRC</b>	<b>CATEGORY ON SCHEDULE 2</b>
Marilyn Leneghan Or current Manager	Manager	15 i
Sarah Hayes	Family Support Worker if registered with CORU as a Social Care Worker	8
Bridget Horgan or current contract counsellor	Contract counsellor	15 e

(See below Schedule 2 of the Children First Act, 2015. Ensure that the whole of the description in the below categories are considered before deciding if workers/volunteers are mandated persons under the act).



**CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015**  
**SCHEDULE 2- MANDATED PERSONS**

**The following classes of persons are specified as mandated persons for the purposes of this Act:**

1. **Registered medical practitioner** within the meaning of section 2 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.
2. **Registered nurse or registered midwife** within the meaning of section 2(1) of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011.
3. **Physiotherapist** registered in the register of members of that profession.
4. **Speech and language therapist** registered in the register of members of that profession.
5. **Occupational therapist** registered in the register of members of that profession.
6. **Registered dentist** within the meaning of section 2 of the Dentists Act 1985.
7. **Psychologist** who practises as such and who is eligible for registration in the register (if any) of members of that profession.
8. **Social care worker** who practises as such and who is eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in the register of that profession.
9. **Social worker** who practises as such and who is eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in the register (if any) of that profession.
10. **Emergency medical technician, paramedic** and advanced paramedic registered with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council under the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (Establishment) Order 2000 (S.I. No. 109 of 2000).
11. **Probation officer** within the meaning of section 1 of the Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983.
12. **Teacher** registered with the Teaching Council.
13. **Member of An Garda Síochána.**
14. **Guardian *ad litem*** appointed in accordance with section 26 of the Child Care Act 1991
15. Person employed in any of the following capacities:
  - (a) **manager of domestic violence shelter;**
  - (b) **manager of homeless provision or emergency accommodation facility;**
  - (c) **manager of asylum seeker accommodation (direct provision) centre;**
  - (d) **addiction counsellor** employed by a body funded, wholly or partly, out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas;
  - (e) **psychotherapist** or a person providing counselling who is registered with one of the voluntary professional bodies;
  - (f) **manager of a language school or other recreational school where children reside away from home;**
  - (g) **member of the clergy** (howsoever described) or pastoral care worker (howsoever described) of a church or other religious community;
  - (h) **director of any institution where a child is detained by an order of a court;**
  - (i) **safeguarding officer, child protection officer** or other person (howsoever described) who is employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational and other bodies and organisations offering services to children;
  - (j) **child care staff member employed in a pre-school service** within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991;
  - (k) **person responsible for the care or management of a youth work service** within the meaning of section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001.
16. **Youth worker** who—
  - (a) holds a professional qualification that is recognised by the National Qualifications Authority in youth work within the meaning of section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 or a related discipline, and
  - (b) is employed in a youth work service within the meaning of section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001.
17. **Foster carer registered with the Agency.**



18. A person carrying on a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991.

## **IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 6 in Tusla Guide for Child Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Practice pp.74-78**

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Implementation is an on-going process and a continuous cycle of development, response to change, review of policies, procedures and practices relevant to Children First.
- The 'Best Practice Theme' checklists, found in Tusla Guide for Child Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Practice, and Tusla Self-Assessment Checklist for Tusla-funded organisations, should be used to assess the Family Resource Centre's compliance with requirements of Children First National Guidance.
- Workers who hold key child safeguarding roles in Shannow Family Resource Centre (Named Person, Designated Liaison Person, Relevant Person) will work with the Board to review and evaluate child safeguarding in Shannow Family Resource Centre. They will assess what resources are needed. They will put in place an implementation plan for child safeguarding with details tasks, timeframe and person(s) responsible.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- Part of the implementation cycles includes monitoring and reviewing performance against tasks required. This helps to evidence and promote best practice for each of the best practice themes. This review process ensures areas of procedure and practice that are working well can be acknowledged and areas requiring improvement can be identified and addressed.
- Shannow Family Resource Centre will monitor, on an ongoing basis, safeguarding practice and training needs via the Family Resource Centre's supervision, support and appraisal structure.
- A Review History and signature sheet can be found at the front of this document.
- SHANNOW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE will assess risks to child safeguarding on an ongoing basis and raise potential risks with the Designated Liaison Person who will suggest changes to internal procedures and practice to mitigate risks.
- Shannow Family Resource Centre Named Person will review guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years or sooner if service issues arise or there are changes in legislation or national policy.



## **EVALUATION**

- Shannow Family Resource Centre will evaluate how well child safeguarding is embedded in the Family Resource Centre using consultation tools appropriate to the audience being consulted.



## CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

**Name of Staff Member:**

**Role:**

I have received, read, and agree to adhere to the Shannow FRC CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES; and I will participate in any training provided in this area.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Schedule of Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015
Appendix 2	Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse
Appendix 3	Child Safeguarding Training Required Sample Form
Appendix 4	Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (CPWRF)
Appendix 5	Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF)
Appendix 6	Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
Appendix 7	Working in Partnership Checklist
Appendix 8	Sample Accident Form
Appendix 9	Sample Incident Form
Appendix 10	What is Guardianship?
Appendix 11	Parental / Guardian Consent Form
Appendix 12	Children First Self Assessment Template
Appendix 13	Managing Trips Away
Appendix 14	Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons
Appendix 15	Procedure for appointing a relevant person
Appendix 16	Online Safety and Cyberbullying



## **APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE OF MANDATED PERSONS UNDER THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015**

Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 specifies the following classes of persons as mandated persons for the purposes of the Act:

1. Registered medical practitioner within the meaning of section 2 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.
2. Registered nurse or registered midwife within the meaning of section 2(1) of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011.
3. Physiotherapist registered in the register of members of that profession.
4. Speech and language therapist registered in the register of members of that profession.
5. Occupational therapist registered in the register of members of that profession.
6. Registered dentist within the meaning of section 2 of the Dentists Act 1985.
7. Psychologist who practises as such and who is eligible for registration in the register (if any) of members of that profession.
8. Social care worker who practises as such and who is eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in the register of that profession.
9. Social worker who practises as such and who is eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in the register (if any) of that profession.
10. Emergency medical technician, paramedic and advanced paramedic registered with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council under the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (Establishment) Order 2000 (S.I. No. 109 of 2000).
11. Probation officer within the meaning of section 1 of the Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983.



12. Teacher registered with the Teaching Council.
13. Member of An Garda Síochána.
14. Guardian ad litem appointed in accordance with section 26 of the Child Care Act 1991.
15. Person employed in any of the following capacities:
  - (a) manager of domestic violence shelter;
  - (b) manager of homeless provision or emergency accommodation facility;
  - (c) manager of asylum seeker accommodation (direct provision) centre;
  - (d) addiction counsellor employed by a body funded, wholly or partly, out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas;
  - (e) psychotherapist or a person providing counselling who is registered with one of the voluntary professional bodies;
  - (f) manager of a language school or other recreational school where children reside away from home;
  - (g) member of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care worker (howsoever described) of a church or other religious community;
  - (h) director of any institution where a child is detained by an order of a court;
  - (i) safeguarding officer, child protection officer or other person (howsoever described) who is employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational and other bodies and organisations offering services to children;
  - (j) child care staff member employed in a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991;
  - (k) person responsible for the care or management of a youth work service within the meaning of section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001.



16. Youth worker who— 91 (a) holds a professional qualification that is recognised by the National Qualifications Authority in youth work within the meaning of section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 or a related discipline, and (b) is employed in a youth work service within the meaning of section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001.

17. Foster carer registered with Tusla.

18. A person carrying on a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991

## **APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE**

If you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí without delay.

In Children First National Guidance, 'a child' means a person under the age of 18 years, who is not or has not been married.

### **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, 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
- Behavioural signs e.g. overactive, aggressive, poor coping skills, impulsive behaviour, indiscriminate friendliness, withdrawn, poor social skills development, bed wetting, soiling or destructive behaviours, substance misuse, running away, sexual promiscuity, self-harm, offending behaviours.

### **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 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 physical contact or intentional physical contact 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 the Children First National Guidance.



## **CYBERBULLYING**

Cyberbullying is defined as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly, over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (Cyberbullying in Schools: Guidance and Resources for Management, Department of Education and Skills 2013). Please see Children First National Guidance 2017 for further information

**APPENDIX 3:**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING TRAINING REQUIRED SAMPLE FORM**

<b>Type of Training</b>	<b>Tusla Introduction to Children First e-learning</b>	<b>Child Safeguarding Statement Policy and Procedures Workshop</b>	<b>Always Children First: Foundation Training</b>	<b>Always Children First: DLP Training</b>	<b>Children First Briefing</b>	<b>Signs of Safety Briefing</b>	<b>Mandated Person Briefing</b>
<b>Number of Board of Management/ Line Managers</b>							
<b>Number of Staff/volunteers with direct contact with children</b>							
<b>Number of Staff/volunteers who work with families but not directly with children</b>							

## **APPENDIX 4: CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE REPORT FORM (CPWRF)**

Reports should generally be made using the electronic Child Protection and Welfare Report Form, which is available at <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

This report form is for use by:

- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children, including Tusla personnel, who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.
- Professionals and individuals involved in the provision of child protection and welfare related services in the community who have service contracts with Tusla.
- Mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, as specified in Schedule 2 of the Act.
- Designated Liaison Persons in any organisation.
- Any member of the public who has a child protection or welfare concern which they believe should be reported to Tusla.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. This will assist Tusla and the Social Work Department in screening the report, assessing the level of risk to the child or the support services required, and when necessary in assigning a priority status to the case.

If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate this by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

In section 6 of the form, you must indicate whether the report is a mandated report and, if so, your category of profession under "Mandated Person's Type". Tusla aims to work in partnership with parents and others. If you are making this report in confidence, you should note that Tusla cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality for the following reasons:

- A Court could order the information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.
- Any individual against whom allegations of abuse are made has a right to fair procedures; however at times this right may need to be secondary to the protection of children at risk. The right of fair procedure applies equally to adults, adolescents and children who have allegations made against them.



You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report', you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

Consideration must also be given to responsibilities under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, which are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 or Children First: National Guidance.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the Tusla duty social worker and discuss your concerns with them (see <http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/> for local contact details).

## **APPENDIX 5: RETROSPECTIVE ABUSE REPORT FORM (RARF)**

This report form is for use by:

- An adult who is disclosing childhood abuse
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services dealing with adults who are attending counselling, psychotherapy, and or any type of emotional wellbeing or support services
- Any professional, individual or group involved in adult health or mental health or other relevant services
- Any professional, individual, service involved with caring for children and young people in the community
- Professionals and individuals involved in the provision of child protection and welfare related services in the community who have service contracts with Tusla
- Mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, as specified in Schedule 2 of the Act
- Designated Liaison Persons in any organisation.

Section 4 of this Form allows for people/professionals (known as Third Party) to make a report on behalf of another person (so called 'adult complainant'). In this section, you must indicate whether the report is a mandated report and, if so, your category of profession under "Mandated Person's Type".

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. This will assist Tusla and the Social Work Department in screening the report, assessing the level of risk and when necessary in assigning a priority status to the case. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate this by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Tusla aims to work in partnership with adult complainants, persons subject to abuse allegations, parents and others. If you are making this report in confidence, you should note that Tusla cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality for the following reasons:

- A Court could order the information be disclosed
- Under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, the Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed



- Any individual against whom allegations of abuse are made has a right to fair procedures; however, at times this right may need to be secondary to the protection of children at risk. The right to fair procedure applies equally to adults, adolescents and children who have allegations made against them.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report', you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

Consideration must also be given to responsibilities under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, which are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 or Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the Tusla duty social worker and discuss your concerns with them (see <http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/> for local contact details

An MSWord version of the Retrospective Abuse Report Form may be accessed at <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

## **APPENDIX 6:**

### **PROTECTIONS FOR PERSONS REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ACT 1998**

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardaí as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious.

Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the HSE who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) and [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)).

## APPENDIX 7: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST

This checklist (from Appendix 7 of the Tusla Child safeguarding Guide) outlines the key areas that should be discussed if working in partnership with other organisations.

<b>Best Practice Themes 1 and 2</b>	
Have both/all parties shared their declaration of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures?	
Have both/all parties compared guidance outlined within their procedures at the outset of the engagement?	
Is it agreed which guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures will be followed or does a new policy need to be developed and implemented?	
Who will take responsibility for communicating the agreed guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures to all involved?	
If it is agreed to follow the existing guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures of one organisation, has there been a review of the policy and accompanying procedures to ensure children within the new service are safeguarded from harm?	
Is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) named and agreed?	
Is the role of the DLP clearly outlined?	
Are mandated persons identified and their responsibilities understood by both organisations?	
<b>Best Practice Theme 3</b>	
Has a communication system been agreed for information sharing between DLPs of both organisations? This should include guidance on decisions to report or not report and the recording of all child protection or welfare concerns.	
If support is needed by workers/volunteers in relation to the processing of a report, who will provide this support?	
Is the procedure for responding to allegations of abuse against a worker/volunteer agreed? Does this include communication pathways between the partner organisations and management of the concern by a 'lead' agency?	
If the project operates outside of Irish jurisdiction (e.g. international trips away), have you identified and incorporated appropriate reporting procedures?	



<b>Best Practice Theme 4</b>	
Have both organisations shared their policies and procedures regarding recruitment and selection of workers/volunteers?	
Have both organisations shared their policies and procedures regarding the management of staff and training requirements?	
Who will take responsibility for induction, training, support and supervision of the workers in relation to following the guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures?	
If the policy and procedures are different between the organisations, how will this be resolved?	
Have both/all parties agreed which organisation's code of behaviour is to be followed?	
If a worker/volunteer breaches the code of behaviour what cross-organisation communication systems are agreed?	
Are children participating in the project registered with one of the organisations already or is this a new project requiring new registration?	

<b>Best Practice Theme 5</b>	
How will information be shared with parents/guardians?	
Has it been agreed by both organisation's whose anti-bullying policy will be followed and has this been communicated to all workers/volunteers involved?	
What is the arrangement for consent in relation to this activity? and it involves a worker from another organisation, how will this information be shared?	

<b>Best Practice Theme 6</b>	
Have you agreed how you will implement and operate your guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures?	



Are there agreed review mechanisms in place?	
--	--



**APPENDIX 8: SAMPLE ACCIDENT REPORT FORM**

**Activity/ Event where the accident occurred:**

**Date:**

**Location:**

- 1. Brief description of what happened:**
- 2. Who was involved?**
- 3. Name and contact details for any witnesses:**
- 4. Any injury sustained / damage done to property?**
- 5. Who dealt with the situation?**
- 6. How was it resolved / dealt with?**
- 7. Any follow up required?**
- 8. Additional information**

**Signature:**

**Name (Block letters):**

**Date:**

**APPENDIX 9: SAMPLE INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

**Activity/ Event where the incident occurred:**

**Date:**

**Location:**

**1. Brief description of what happened:**

**2. Who was involved?**

**3. Name and contact details for any witnesses:**

**4. Any injury sustained / damage done to property?**

**5. Who dealt with the incident?**

**6. How was it resolved / dealt with?**

**7. Any follow up required?**

**Additional information:**

**Signature:**

**Name (Block letters):**

**Date:**

## **APPENDIX 10: WHAT IS GUARDIANSHIP?**

“Guardianship means the rights and duties of parents in respect of the upbringing of their children. A guardian has the right to make all major decisions affecting the child's upbringing, including choice of school, medical treatment, religious matters, health requirements and decisions about leaving the country.

Guardians are responsible for the welfare of the child. Welfare includes the moral, intellectual and physical wellbeing of the child and where there is property held on behalf of the child, it includes the proper administration of such property” (Court Service of Ireland)

Who is a guardian?

Married parents of a child are ‘joint guardians’ and have equal rights in relation to the child. The rights of parents to guardianship are set down in Section 6 of the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964.

On 18th January 2016 certain provisions of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 came into effect that made a number of changes to the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964. If a child is born outside of marriage, the mother is the sole guardian. The position of the unmarried father of the child is not so certain. An unmarried father will automatically be a guardian if he has lived with the child's mother for 12 consecutive months after 18th January 2016, including at least three months with the mother and child following the child's birth. Where the father does not meet these criteria, he may still gain guardianship through entering into a formal agreement with the mother or by applying to the District Court. In situations where the father has been appointed joint guardian of a child, then his consent is required for certain things relating to the child's general welfare and other items.

Source: pp.69 Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2018) [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**APPENDIX 11: SAMPLE PARENTAL / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM**

**[insert details of FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE Privacy Policy]**

**For participation in** (activity / programme / club):

**Location:**

**Transport information (if relevant):**

**Date(s):**

**Name of child:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mobile:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other relevant information:**

(Please mention any need-to-know and relevant medical conditions, allergies, special needs or dietary requirements)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Contact details for parent / guardian**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mobile:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other** contact person in case of an emergency (different to the person listed above)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mobile:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In case of medical emergency:**

In the event of illness or accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified practitioner and / or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

**Name of family doctor:** \_\_\_\_\_

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



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**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that there will be suitable supervision while the young people are in the care of the Family Resource Centre. I agree that my child will be under the authority of, and answerable to, the staff and volunteers of the Family Resource Centre.

I give my consent for my child to be photographed / videoed as I understand that the proceedings may be photographed / videoed and used for promotional purposes such as **[insert purposes]** by the Family Resource Centre.

Please see our Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

The Family Resource Centre operates an online internet security system and internet access on Family Resource Centre computers in the Centre is supervised.

This Consent form will be shared within Family Resource Centre on a “need to know basis”. If you do not fully understand any of the questions, need further information or wish to discuss any of your answers it is most important that you contact the Family Resource Centre immediately.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Guardian)

(Block letters)



**Relationship to child:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Child)

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

**Appendix 12: CHILDREN FIRST SELF ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

# **CHILDREN FIRST SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR FUNDED SERVICES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015 & CHILDREN FIRST GUIDANCE 2017 FOR TUSLA FUNDED ORGANISATIONS**

<b><u>TUSLA FUNDING MANAGER (OR NOMINEE RESPONSIBLE) AND CONTACT DETAILS:</u></b>	<b><u>DATE:</u></b>
_____	_____
_____	
_____	
<b><u>NAME and ADDRESS OF ORGANISATION:</u></b>	<b><u>NAME OF CONTACT PERSON:</u></b>
_____	_____
_____	
_____	
_____	



## **Introduction**

It is a requirement of your funding that, if requested, you demonstrate that your organisation is fulfilling any obligations it may have under the Children First Act, 2015 and that it is implementing Children First, National Guidance for the Welfare and Protection of Children 2017.

## **Purpose**

The Children First Act, 2015 places a legal responsibility on organisations which are classed as “providers of relevant services” to produce a Child Safeguarding Statement.

Any organization may have workers who are classed as mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015 and will therefore have specific responsibilities.

In addition, Children First Guidance 2017 places an obligation on organisations (not just providers of relevant services) to promote the well-being of children and to provide them with the highest possible standard of care and safeguard them from abuse.

It is the responsibility of government departments to ensure that children and young people are kept safe while accessing services provided or funded by each department. Tusla utilises government money to fund services and therefore has a responsibility to ensure that these services are aware of, and comply with, the obligations under Children First Guidance 2017 and relevant legislation.

This Self-assessment Tool is designed to ask specific questions to help organisations assure themselves and demonstrate to the funding manager that their Child Safeguarding Statement (where relevant) is compliant with the Children First Act, 2015. It also allows organisations to demonstrate that their guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures are in line with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017.

If the answer is “**NO**” to any of the questions, this may indicate that your child safeguarding statement and/ or policy requires a review and a plan to address this should be put in place.

## **How to use this Self-Assessment Tool**

1. Identify a named senior person with lead responsibility to complete this Self-Assessment Tool
2. All sections to be completed in full,



3. Where response is “Yes” then outline supporting evidence.
4. Where response is “No”, the tool facilitates you to indicate what action is required, the timeframe and name of person responsible.

### **Please Note - Supporting Evidence**

It is not necessary to submit this tool or supporting evidence at this stage, but it must be available if requested. Supporting evidence is evidence of how you have put your policy and procedures into practice.

### **Essential Resources, 2017**

Children First Act, 2015

Children First: National Guidance for the Welfare and Protection of Children (DCYA 2017)

Child Protection & Welfare Practice Handbook (HSE 2011)

Child Protection & Welfare Practice Handbook 2 (Tusla 2019)

Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (Tusla 2017)

Guidance on Developing A Child Safeguarding Statement (Tusla 2017)

A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection Concerns (Tusla 2017)

Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff (Tusla 2017)

Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes (Tusla 2017)

### **Abbreviations**

**Children First Guidance 2017:** Children First: National Guidance for the Welfare and Protection of Children, 2017

**CFA 2015:** Children First Act, 2015

**GNVB:** Garda National Vetting Bureau

**CSS:** Child Safeguarding Statement

**Child Safeguarding Guide:** Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy Procedure and Practice



**Please Note:** The term “workers” refers to management, staff, volunteers, students, those on clinical / training / work placements, contractors (that have access to children), Board of Management and Management Committees

<b>Type of Organisation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Are you the provider of a relevant service<sup>1</sup>?</b>		
<p><b>If <u>you are a provider</u> of a relevant service please complete table below (Child Safeguarding Statement) and continue through the rest of the document.</b>  <b>If you <u>are not a provider</u> of a relevant service, please go to page 6.</b></p>		

<b>Child Safeguarding Statement</b>			
<p><b>Please answer the questions below.</b>  <b>The following are required to be stated on the CSS:</b></p>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<p><b>If no or partially, then indicate:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. What actions are required</b></li> <li><b>2. Person responsible</b></li> <li><b>3. Date to be completed</b></li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> Provider of Relevant Service as defined in Children First Act, 2015



Have you specified the name of the service you provide?			
Have you outlined what services and activities you provide to children in your care?			
Have you appointed and named your relevant person?			
Have you outlined the guiding principles to be observed to ensure that a child is safe from harm while availing of your service?			
Have you clearly stated that all six specified procedures as set out in s.11(3) of the CFA 2015 are in place?			
Have you stated all potential risks of harm (as defined in the CFA 2015) to a child availing of your service clearly in your CSS?(Children First Guidance, 2017 pg 32)			
Have you stated that all relevant policies and/or procedures are available on request?			
Is your Child Safeguarding Statement displayed prominently in your service(s)?			
Have you given your workers a copy of your CSS?			
Is your CSS available to parents, young people, members of the public and Tusla if requested?			
Have you added the review date (dated within 2 years) on the CSS?			



## Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures

<b>Best Practice Theme 1: Guiding Principles</b>	<b>If yes, list supporting evidence available?</b>	<b>If no or partially, then indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person responsible 3. Date to be completed</b>
Have you developed a declaration of guiding principles for your service?		
Does your declaration of guiding principles specify whom it applies to?		
Have you communicated your guiding principles to children/young people, parents/guardians, workers and volunteers?		
<b>Best Practice Theme 2: Key Personnel in Safeguarding</b>	<b>If yes, list supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and put into practice?</b>	<b>If no or partially, then indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person responsible 3. Date to be completed</b>
Do your procedures include a named person to develop your organisation's guiding principles		



and child safeguarding procedures?		
Do your procedures name the designated liaison person and deputy DLP?		
Do your procedures outline the role and responsibilities of the DLP / deputy DLP?		
Do your procedures outline the role and responsibilities of mandated persons?		
Do you outline the procedure for maintaining a list of all mandated persons in your organisation?		

<b>Best Practice Theme 3: Responding to and reporting of child</b>	<b>If yes, list supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and put into practice?</b>	<b>If no or partially, then indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person responsible</b>
--	---	--



<b>protection &amp; welfare concerns</b>		<b>3. Date to be completed</b>
Do you include guidance on “Reasonable Grounds for Concern”?		
Do your procedures make reference to the definitions, signs and indicators of child abuse and neglect as per Children First Guidance 2017?		
Do your procedures outline the responsibility of mandated persons to report child protection concerns?		
Do you have a reporting procedure that clearly outlines the responsibility to report child abuse, neglect and welfare concerns?		
Do you have procedures on dealing with disclosures?		
Do you have a reporting procedure for dealing with adult disclosures?		



Do you have a procedure to deal with allegations of abuse against workers / volunteers / management?		
Do you have a statement on confidentiality?		
Do you have standardised recording procedures in all your services in cases of children at risk or potentially at risk of abuse, neglect or welfare concerns?		
Do your procedures state that you will cooperate with Tusla on the sharing of records where a child welfare or protection issue arises?		
<b>Best Practice Theme 4: Working safely with children &amp; young people</b>	<b>If yes, list supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and put into practice?</b>	<b>If no or partially, then indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person responsible 3. Date to be completed</b>
Do you have a recruitment and selection procedure?		



Do you have a training strategy for all workers/volunteers/management in child safeguarding?		
Do you outline the procedures to support the safe management of activities?		
Do you have a code of behaviour between staff and children/young people?		
Do you have an accident procedure?		
Do you have an incident procedure?		
Where relevant, do you have a procedure on day-trips and outings for children?		
Do you have a procedure for support and supervision of all workers and volunteers?		
Do your procedures outline the responsibility for all workers to report concerns they have about a colleague's practices?		
Do you have a disciplinary procedure?		



<p>Best Practice Theme 5: Procedures for sharing your guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures &amp; Involving parents/carers, families, children and young people</p>	<p><b>If yes, list supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and put into practice?</b></p>	<p><b>If no or partially, then indicate:</b>  <b>1. What actions are required</b>  <b>2. Person responsible</b>  <b>3. Date to be completed</b></p>
<p>Do your procedures state that you will provide a copy of your guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures to parents upon request?</p>		
<p>Do you outline the procedure for providing information on your guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures to parents and children / young people?</p>		
<p>Do your procedures outline how you routinely inform children of their right to be protected, consulted and treated with respect?</p>		



Do you have an anti-bullying procedure?		
Do you have a communications strategy?		
Do you have a procedure on working in partnership with parents?		
Do you have a complaints procedure consistent with Child and Family Act 2014?		



**ONLY COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU PROVIDE SERVICES TO CHILDREN AS OUTLINED ON PAGE 11, CHAPTER 2, CHILDREN FIRST GUIDANCE 2017.**

<p>Additional Guidance:  <b>Children First Guidance 2017 outlines circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm. Depending on the children you work with, you may have to tailor your guidance/ procedures to take account of the range of issues that may place them at greater risk of abuse or neglect.</b></p>	<p><b>If yes, do you have specific guidance to take account of additional vulnerabilities to abuse and neglect? Please outline supporting evidence, including how this has been communicated and put into practice.</b></p>	<p><b>If you do not have specific guidance to take account of additional vulnerabilities to abuse and neglect, indicate:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. What actions are required</b></li> <li><b>2. Person Responsible</b></li> <li><b>3. Date to be completed</b></li> </ol>
Do you provide services to children with disabilities?		
Do you provide services to children in care?		
Do you provide services to children living away from home		



(e.g. recreational settings, educational settings, etc.)?		
Do you provide services to children with communication difficulties?		
Do you provide services to children who have a parent / parents with problems in their own lives?		

## **APPENDIX 13: MANAGING TRIPS AWAY**

If the activities involve use of off-site facilities or staying away from home overnight, consideration should be paid to the following:

- Safe methods of transport;
- Adequate insurance to cover all aspects of the trip;
- Written parental consent (for each individual trip);
- Any information about the children/young people which may be relevant to staying away overnight, e.g. allergies, medical problems, special needs, etc.;
- Number of workers/volunteers required to adequately supervise children/young people at all times;
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements;
- Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

The following guidance is for workers/volunteers who are involved in organising residential/day trips away for children/young people.

### **Planning and documentation**

- Ensure permission forms are signed and received from parents/guardians prior to departure;
- Ensure that all necessary medical forms are filled out detailing medical conditions, allergies and/or procedures that may need to be looked after during the trip;
- Ensure you have adequate insurance cover for the trips and activities involved;
- The selection process for choosing the children/young people for the trip must be fair and transparent;
- Follow proper recruitment procedures when selecting workers/volunteers to go on the trip, allowing enough time for Garda vetting, police checks and reference checks which may be outside Irish jurisdiction;
- Ensure that all workers/volunteers have received adequate child safeguarding training and are aware of the organisation's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures;
- Ensure that emergency contact phone numbers for parents/guardians are documented and available at all times;
- All workers/volunteers should be given clear roles and responsibilities for the trip;
- There should be one person appointed as the overall leader of the group who will have final decision making authority during the trip;



- Ensure that a risk assessment has been conducted in line with the organisation's policy.

### **Accommodation**

- In the planning stage check the proposed sleeping arrangements for participants, employees/volunteers and other support personnel;
- Check health and safety issues relating to the accommodation such as emergency evacuation for upstairs rooms, accessibility of rooms and corridors for mobility of the participants;
- Ensure that single-gender dormitories/rooms are used for children/young people;
- Ensure that only children/young people of similar age share sleeping accommodation
- Ensure all workers/volunteers have a list of all the children/young people's accommodation allocation;
- Adults should never enter children's/young people's rooms without knocking first.

### **Preparing participants and programme**

- Prepare an information pack for participants including the programme of activities, emergency information if necessary and a 'help me' card, particularly for foreign trips.
- It is essential that the children/young people are involved in every aspect of the process. This is an ideal opportunity for them to share the responsibility for the trip/activities that take place.
- A code of behaviour for the children/young people should be signed by the parents/guardian.
- Ensure one worker/volunteer is appointed group leader; they will have various responsibilities including making a report following the trip.
- There should be a plan for communication with parents/guardians and participants to inform them of travel and accommodation details, activities, special requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. This can take the form of meetings or written correspondence.

### **Emergency procedures**

- Have clear emergency procedures should you need to curtail your trip; have an emergency fund and know where the children/young people, workers and volunteers are at all times.



- Children/young people should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.
- Have a back-up plan if the programme changes for any reason.
- Bring a medical/first aid kit with you.
- Workers/volunteers should ensure they have the contact details of senior management with them while on the trip.
- For foreign trips, in particular, it is advisable to have an agreed contact person in the organisation who will be able to respond to emergencies if they occur at any time of the day or night. This may involve liaising with parents/guardians in difficult situations that can be hard to do over the phone. This person should ideally be the line manager responsible for the trip or activity and should have the full contact details of the group and the full itinerary for the trip.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

To put an effective monitoring and evaluation system in place, each of the following should be addressed:

- Systems for monitoring and evaluation should be developed prior to the trip and agreed among the team.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out with the participants, employees and volunteers.
- There should be daily evaluations with the participants, employees and volunteers.
- Carry out a full and final evaluation which should be a real exercise to learn from. Review your risk assessment from the planning process to see if there are any areas that need to be addressed.
- Make sure there is a system for keeping records and reports during the trip.

Further information on trips away can be found on the Léargas website, [www.leargas.ie](http://www.leargas.ie).



## APPENDIX 14

### SAMPLE PROCEDURE

#### **Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons**

The following is a sample only. The procedure should be adapted for the purposes of each organisation and where relevant additional processes added. Areas highlighted in blue are to be filled in as appropriate with the specific information relating to the organisation.

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## PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINING A LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS

The Children First Act 2015, Section 11 requires organisations that are providers of Relevant Services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Section 11, (3) of the Act requires that '*A child safeguarding statement shall... in that regard, specify the procedures that are in place*' for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.

**xxxxx (insert name of the organisation ). As an organisation we have a responsibility to maintain a list of mandated persons in line with the above Act.**

### **Purpose of this procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

5. Meet the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015, by putting in place a procedure for maintaining a list of persons who are mandated persons as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Act.
6. Ensure that all management, staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons.
7. Ensure that all management and staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the responsibilities of Mandated Persons

### **Role of the Mandated Persons**

As defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach or exceed a particular threshold to the local Tusla social work duty service and to cooperate in the assessment of



mandated reports (please see Children First: National Guidance (2017) Chapter 3, for further information on the roles of mandated persons and Appendix 2: Schedule of Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015 a copy of which is available as an Appendix in this procedure).

## **Outline of procedure**

### **Employers**

It is the responsibility of *(insert as appropriate- Human Resources, Board of Management, Delegated Senior Manager etc.)* \_\_\_\_\_ to identify persons in positions that could be characterised as Mandated Persons with responsibility under Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015. Those staff members will be advised of their responsibility as Mandated Persons by letter, and a copy of the letter sent will be held on their personnel file. Line Managers of all staff who are identified as Mandated Persons will also be informed of their status by letter. A full list of the employees and line managers who were sent letters in this regard will be held by *(insert Human Resources, Board of Management, Delegated Manager etc.)* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Line Managers**

Line Managers of identified Mandated Persons will inform new and existing staff of their Mandated Person responsibility and this should be discussed within Supervision.

- Managers must ensure that employees who are Mandated Persons meet their responsibilities and comply with these procedures through monitoring, audit and review
- Managers must facilitate training for employees who are Mandated Persons where necessary
- Managers are responsible for consulting with staff to review the Mandated Persons list to remove persons who are not identified as Mandated Persons. They must inform *(insert Human Resources, Board of*



*Management, Delegated Manager etc.)* \_\_\_\_\_ of any changes required to the list.

It is the Line manager's responsibility to ensure that all information, induction and training necessary for staff members who are Mandated Persons is undertaken with particular reference to the reporting procedure.

### **Staff (and or volunteers)**

- Staff who are Mandated Persons when fulfilling their legal responsibility should ensure their line manager/Designated Liaison Person is aware when they are making a report.
- Those who were graded as Mandated Persons but self-determined they did not meet the criteria as Mandated Person are advised to inform their line management.

### **Arrangements to notify staff of their Mandated Person Responsibility**

Employment contracts for all staff will indicate that they must adhere to all relevant legislation. This includes the Children First Act. The following will be included in all existing and new employee contracts. 'You are required to comply with legislation / policies which have particular application to your position. Details of these policies will be communicated to you by your Line manager'.

### **Maintenance and Production of a List of Mandated Persons**

A list of Mandated Persons will be maintained at *(insert as appropriate- National level/Regional level/ Local level)* \_\_\_\_\_ Where multiple lists are being kept, line managers will be identified to hold lists of Mandated Person which must be updated and submitted to *(insert- name of person holding full organisational list )* \_\_\_\_\_ who will maintain a the organisational list of Mandated Persons.

### **Review**

All arrangements for maintaining a list/s of mandated persons outlined in this procedure will be reviewed within 24 months of the date outlined below or if there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.



Date: XXXXX

## APPENDIX 15

### SAMPLE PROCEDURE

#### **Procedure for appointing a relevant person/s for the purposes of the Children First Act, 2015.**

The following is a sample only. The procedure should be adapted for the purposes of each organisation and where relevant additional processes added. Areas highlighted in blue are to be filled in as appropriate with the specific information relating to the organisation.

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#### **PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING A RELEVANT PERSON/S FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT, 2015**

The Children First Act 2015, Section 11 requires organisations that are providers of Relevant Services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.



Section 11, (3) (g) of the Act requires that 'A *child safeguarding statement shall... in that regard, specify the procedures that are in place*' for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of this Part.

Part 2 (8) of the Act outlines the definition in relation to "Relevant Person" which means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.

**As an organisation we have a responsibility to appoint a Relevant Person/s in line with the above Act.**

### **Purpose of this procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

8. Meet the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015, by outlining in the Child Safeguarding Statement/s the specified procedures required, which include a "procedure for the appointment of Relevant Person/s.
9. Ensure that all staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the process to appoint the Relevant Person/s.
10. Ensure all staff/volunteers are aware of who has been appointed as the Relevant Person/s as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
11. Ensure that all parents, children, members of the public and Tusla are aware that they may receive a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement upon request. This statement will contain the details of the the Relevant Person/s.

### **Roles associated with this procedure**

4. The **XXXXX (insert as appropriate) CEO, Board of Management,** has responsibility for appointing a Relevant Person/s.



5. The appointed Relevant Person/s in line with the Children First Act, 2015 will be the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.
6. Management and Staff/volunteers will ensure that any queries in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement are directed to the Relevant Person/s named.

### **Outline of Procedure**

The procedure to appoint a Relevant Person/s is as follows.

7. The **XXXX CEO, Chair of Board of Management, Owner/proprietor** may decide to be the named Relevant Person/s for the purpose of the Child Safeguarding Statement.
8. The **XXXXX CEO, Board of Management, Owner/proprietor** may appoint the Relevant Person/s and delegate the function to a nominated person in the organisation.
9. If appointed, the role and function of the Relevant Person/s will be outlined in a letter to the nominated person.
10. The name of the Relevant Person/s will be included on the Child Safeguarding Statement.
11. All staff/volunteers will be made aware of who has been appointed as the Relevant Person/s by receiving a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement which includes the name of the Relevant Person/s. All parents, children, members of the public and Tusla will also receive a copy of the statement upon request which will inform them of who has been appointed as a Relevant Person/s.
12. This procedure and the role and function of the Relevant Person/s will be reviewed within 24 months of the date and outlined on the Child Safeguarding Statement, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

DATE: **XXXXXX**



## APPENDIX 16 ONLINE SAFETY AND CYBERBULLYING

The following information is taken from Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. For the full text and References see [Appendix 7 – Online Safety & Appendix 8 – Cyberbullying of that document at \[www.tusla.ie\]\(http://www.tusla.ie\)](#) Children First resources and publications.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines Social Media as a '*form of electronic communication...through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content*'. Any website that enables users to interact is considered a social media site, including social networking sites (SNS) such as *Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter*; gaming sites and virtual worlds such as *Club Penguin, Moshi Monsters and the Sims*; video sharing sites such as *YouTube*; and blogging sites such as *Tumblr*.

There are a number of possible motivations for Social Media usage, including:

- To connect with others with common interests and hobbies;
- To connect with friends, and make new ones;
- To browse the internet for information;
- To 'chat' with others, download music and play games;
- A need to belong and a need for self-presentation;
- To satisfy individuals' need for self-worth and self-integrity; Risks and Dangers

The sections below outline some of the risks and dangers associated with social media usage.

### **Access to inappropriate content, including pornography:**

Children and young people may be exposed to illegal or unsuitable content online, such as:

- Pornography
- Child abuse images
- Dangerous advice encouraging eating disorders, self-harm or suicide
- Excessive violence or race hate materials
- Some websites show illegal content. Others that are legal might have unregulated advice or are meant for adults only.

Children may come across this content by mistake, or they may look for it because they are curious. Promises of special offers or prizes can also draw young people to inappropriate sites or material. Furthermore, many online games are free but offer the chance to buy items such as extra lives or new levels; children may run up big bills without realising it or provide personal details in order to receive 'extra lives' or game credits.

### **Harmful online communities:**



Young people may also access websites which promote eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia or self-harm. Harmful online communities can change the way young people see real life – even if they do not want that to happen.

**Ignoring age restrictions:**

Some websites and games use age restrictions and checks to make sure that children don't see unsuitable content. Children must be at least 13 years of age to register on most social networking websites. However, verifying the age of a member is an issue.

**'Friending' or communicating with people they don't know:** Children and young people may 'chat' or become 'friends' with people on social networks or online games, even if they do not know them or have never met them in person. These people are unknown strangers and their public persona on social media does not necessarily reflect the reality of who they are or what their motives may be.

**Grooming and sexual abuse:**

'Groomers' can use social media sites, instant messaging apps (including teen dating apps), or online gaming platforms to connect with a young person or child. They can spend time learning about a young person's interests from their online profiles and use this knowledge to help them build a relationship with the child or young person. It is easy for groomers to hide their identity online. For example, they may pretend to be a child and then chat and become 'friends' with children they are targeting.

**Child sexual abuse on line:**

When sexual exploitation happens online, young people may be persuaded, or forced, to send or post sexually explicit images of themselves, take part in sexual activities via a webcam or Smartphone, or have sexual conversations by text or instant messaging.

Abusers may threaten to send images, videos or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in further sexual activity or pay the abuser money.

**Sharing personal information:**

Privacy controls can limit who can see a child's details, like their name, age and where they live. However, when a child connects to someone as a 'friend', that person will have access to the child's personal information. Some 'free' games might ask a child to provide personal details before they can play; some will then illegally rent or sell this data on to others. Many apps and social networking sites use software to locate where the user is. Children and young people can also reveal their location by tagging photos on sites such as on Instagram or 'checking in' on Facebook or Foursquare. This means that people can find out where the child lives, socialises, works or studies.



**‘Sexting’:**

‘Sexting’ involves sending sexually explicit images, videos or text messages via ICT. Primarily such ‘sexts’ are sent using mobile phones and/or chat apps such as Snapchat, Viber and WhatsApp. The ‘sext’ can constitute child pornography.

**Length of time online:**

An ISPPC Survey on Children and the Internet (2011) found most children and young people (around half) said they spent 1-3 hours online per day. 9% of the secondary school aged group said they spent between 3-5 hours online per day. Less than 5% of the older young people said they didn’t use the internet.

Just under half of the secondary school aged group said they accessed the internet at home in their bedroom (44%), rather than in a communal area at home; fewer children in the primary school aged group said they accessed the internet in their bedroom (23%).

The young people who spent longer online were found to be more likely to access the internet in their own rooms and to engage in more social activities online. Furthermore, young people who spent longer online are also generally more likely to be exposed to all the elements and risks of the internet, including being more likely to give out personal details, not to use privacy settings, to meet up with someone from online and to access sites for the 18+ age group.

**Depression:** A link has been identified between the amount of time spent on Facebook by high school students and their likelihood to experience depression.

**Anxiety & Compulsive Behaviour:** There are several studies linking social media to anxiety and compulsive behaviour. Younger generations (particularly the iGeneration<sup>9</sup> and Net Generation<sup>10</sup>) are checking in very often (defined as every hour, every 15 minutes, or all the time) with their messages and social networks. A new medical term has been created out of this constant connectivity. Phantom vibration syndrome, defined as perceived vibration from a mobile phone that is not vibrating, has been reported to occur with large numbers of people. Phantom vibration syndrome may reflect a manifestation of the anxiety that mobile phones elicit in those obsessed with checking in on their social media and messages.

**Loneliness and Narcissism:** Narcissistic personality disorder is marked by a grandiose sense of self-importance, fantasies of unlimited power, self-promotion, vanity and superficial relationships. Many studies show that social networking sites exacerbate narcissism. More time spent on Facebook and a higher frequency of checking Facebook predicted higher narcissism scores. Social media affects mental health by influencing how people view, maintain, and interact with their social network. Social media is so seductive because it allows for the illusion of



companionship without the demands of friendship.

**Diminished privacy:** Another way that social media is changing how young adults interact with their networks of relationships is by changing the privacy of these relationships. The relationships people have on Facebook are visible to many, often resulting in a loss of privacy within personal relationships. Monitoring of others' activities on social media can lead to negative relationship outcomes such as online and offline relational intrusion, stress from 'defriending' and blocking, or students catching their 'significant other' cheating online. Bullying can also occur.

**Fear of missing out & Diminished self-esteem:** Fear of missing out refers to the blend of anxiety, inadequacy and irritation that can flare up while skimming social media such as Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram. The worry that the fear of missing out signals in the mind is set off by the fear of 'regret'.

Social media users are often exposed to details about their peers' lives that were not actively sought out. Exposure to other people's activities can lead to users comparing their own social lives with that of their peers which subsequently may have harmful effects. Fear of missing out keeps people from being able to relax and be content with their particular circumstances because they are bombarded with the interesting activities of their friends. Fear of missing out can also foster a feeling of victimization and exclusion in young adults.

Making social comparisons was associated with lower self-esteem and more negative health outcomes. Use of the internet and social media has been linked to increased social comparison and diminished self-esteem and self-image. Research findings have shown that Facebook usage can be damaging to romantic relationships due to increased jealousy, partner surveillance and compulsive Internet use.

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<sup>9</sup> Those born after 1994 who have grown up with smartphones and direct access to online content.

<sup>10</sup> Those born between 1982 and 1991 who have grown up with computers and the internet.

### **The Impact of Sedentary Behaviours on Mental Health:**

Sedentary behaviours, like those which social media usage encourages, have been linked to physical health risks, including: increased risk of type II diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and metabolic syndrome.

Several studies provide evidence that people with high levels of sedentary behaviour (for example, TV watching and computer use) have an increased risk of developing a depressive and/or anxiety disorder. While there is a connection between sedentary behaviours and mental health risks, it is unclear which one



follows the other. People who spend more time in sedentary behaviours have less time for face-to-face social interaction and physical activity, both of which have been proven to be protective against mental disorders.

### **Social Media and ICT correlation with disrupted sleep patterns:**

There is a correlation between disrupted sleep patterns and use of ICT and social media. One of the reasons for this is the effect of the particular lighting used to illuminate many screen devices which interferes with the brain's ability to produce the chemicals that help a person sleep. Browsing social media before bed is not just distracting from sleep; it can quite literally stop a person from being sleepy at all. This is particularly concerning as the connection between sleep and mental health is well documented.

Poor sleep can make people less receptive to positive emotions and a link has been identified between disrupted sleep patterns and depression.

**Rapid task switching** (also known as multitasking) encouraged by social media and ICT usage may also be a root cause of depression. While multitasking is inherently a human trait, technology has perhaps overly encouraged and promoted it. The current use of multi-window computer environments, multi-app Smartphone screens and the wide ranging sensory stimulation (and distraction) offered by high definition, customisable visual and auditory signals, coupled with tactile stimulation through vibrations, all contribute to reducing the ability to focus and increase an individual's vulnerability to depression.

### **Responses & Solutions**

It is recommended that young people have an awareness of how online activities make them feel. For example if they feel anxious or sad, or if those online activities might be getting in the way of other interests that improve their overall mental health and wellbeing.

Parents should also be aware of the threats to mental health that their children can face. By understanding how social media can affect the mental health of their children, parents can talk to their children about social media habits, balancing their time on social media and ICT, and help protect their children from experiencing mental health issues later in life.

### **How do we safeguard children from the dangers of excessive internet usage?**

- Keep up to date with developments in internet technology:
- Know what sites children are accessing, what they do on these sites, why they access these sites, who they have contact with, how long they are on the internet, what are their worries while using the internet and what supports are available for children.
- Become familiar with social media language; for example, **LMIRL** (let's meet



inreal life), **ASL** (age, sex, location), **NIFOC** (nude in front of computer). The UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (Ceop) has identified a helpfulguide to social media language<sup>11</sup>. It is essential that parents learn to identify warning signs of excessive or inappropriate ICT and social medial usage to aid early detection and intervention.

- Keep communication channels open with children. It can be helpful to discussrisky and safe behaviour (privacy settings, not using profile photos, not using own names), help to set up social networks, equip children with coping skills and information on where to get help, discuss opinions on the benefits and limitations of the internet, and talk to children about their online reputation.
- Set controls using security and filter software, supervise the time and place theyuse the internet, limit the time of access and regularly check user history.
- Create a healthy culture – agree basic usage rules together e.g. time limits and places of use (adults need to model these rules); make going online a daily eventwhich allows adults to monitor and observe reactions.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as ‘an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly, over time, against a victim whocannot easily defend him or herself’ (DES 2013).

Debate surrounds the use of the word *repeated* in this definition of cyber-bullying, as in some instances one behavioural act can create an ongoing sense of intimidation for the victim (i.e. a single posting of a humiliating photo/video can be viewed by a large audience with long standing affects; therefore ‘one post’ can be multiplied online to equate with ‘repeatedly’).

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic and digital means, particularly mobile phones, personal computers, email and internet use to deliberately harass, ridicule or hurt another. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying with Information Communication Technology (ICT) used to deliberately hurt someone else. Messages (text, email), photographs, videos can all be used to spread rumors, make threats orharass.

Cyberbullying differs from more traditional forms of bullying in a number of ways:

- The audience is now larger,



- There are no time or location barriers, it can happen 24/7. The target's reaction is often not seen, leading to a reduction in feeling of empathy or guilt.
- It can be anonymous

### Forms of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be classified by the media through which the abuse occurs, (i.e. mobile phones, instant messenger, chat rooms, social networking sites, video/photo sharing sites/apps, and gaming sites, etc) and/or by the nature of the abuse itself (i.e. flaming, impersonation, harassment, etc).

Willard (2007) has identified the following seven forms of cyberbullying:

1. **Flaming** – On-line 'fights' using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.
2. **Harassment** – Repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages.
3. **Denigration** – Intentionally setting out to damage a person's reputation or friendships by sending or posting derogatory comments, cruel gossip, or rumours about the person; creating a web page or web site devoted to insulting another person.
4. **Impersonation** – Gaining access to someone's account, posing as that person, and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person's reputation or friendships. This behaviour is commonly referred to as 'fraping' when it occurs using Facebook.
5. **Outing and Trickery** – Sharing someone's personal or embarrassing information or images online or via mobile phone or other electronic media, or tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online.
6. **Exclusion** – Intentionally excluding someone from an online group (i.e. a 'friend list', a gaming environment, or group chat). Within a gaming context the term '*griever*' is often applied to a player who deliberately irritates and harasses other players within the game, using aspects of the game in unintended ways.
7. **Cyberstalking** – Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm that are highly intimidating, or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his/her safety. Another definition of cyberstalking is using the Internet or other electronic means as a way to harass, intimidate, threaten, monitor or make unwanted advances towards



another. It can involve direct communications through e-mails, chat rooms, bulletin boards or social sites such as Facebook, the surreptitious gathering of information regarding the target, or covert observation<sup>12</sup>.

### **What are the signs/symptoms that someone is being cyber-bullied?**

Some signs or symptoms that may present when a child or young person is experiencing cyberbullying include:

- More frequent health problems – headaches, stomach aches, frequent absenteeism, sleep problems, depression, or suicidal thoughts;
- Behavioural and emotional changes – distressed, anxious, frustrated, fearful, angry;
- School related changes – inability to concentrate, drop in academic performance, reluctance to attend school;
- Negative emotional expressions after use of social media – poor self-image, sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, suspicion of others.

Changes in online behaviour – more careful or cautious approaches to communicating online;

- Being emotionally upset during or after using the Internet or the phone;
- Being very secretive or protective of their digital life;
- Wanting to stop using the computer or mobile phone;
- Being nervous or jumpy when getting an instant message, text, or email;
- Avoiding discussions about computer or mobile phone activities; and
- Physical symptoms such as self-harm, eating disorders, and/or risky Behaviours.

### **Practice Note**

Actions to consider when a young person is the target of cyberbullying:

- Confirm that you are dealing with bullying behaviour.
- Listen calmly and uncritically to the report the young person is making.
- Remind the young person that it is not their fault; it is the person who is doing the bullying that has the problem.
- Tell the young person not to respond to the bully as this can exacerbate the issue.
- Keep a copy of all correspondence between the young person and the bully.
- Encourage the young person to remove the cyber-bully as a 'friend' online and block them from his/her phone.



- Report the issue to the website and/or mobile phone company as appropriate.

Serious issues should be reported to The Garda Síochána – legal issues include making inappropriate sexual suggestions, racist remarks or persistent bullying that is seriously damaging to the young person's well-being