

SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

An NYCI Toolkit for Youth Work
Organisations to design, review and
evaluate your child safeguarding
policy and procedures



The National Youth Council Of Ireland

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland. It represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

www.youth.ie

NYCI National Child Protection Programme

The NYCI National Child Protection Programme supports and resources the youth work sector to meet its safeguarding responsibilities. The programme is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

www.childprotection.ie



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
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Glossary

Child Safeguarding: ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by workers and volunteers to concerns about the safety and welfare of children, that includes concerns for online safety. Child safeguarding is about protecting children from harm, promoting their welfare and creating an environment that enables and encourages children and young people to grow, develop and reach their full potential.

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

Child Safeguarding policy and procedures: this refers to all specified procedures outlined in the Children First legislation and all additional safeguarding procedures that your organisation has in place to manage any risk identified and to ensure safe and effective services are provided to children and young people.

Child/Young Person: a person under the age of 18 years of age.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children: national, overarching guidance for the protection and welfare of children, published by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL): a resource to staff and volunteers who have a child protection concern. DLPs and DDLs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies.

Provider of a relevant service: 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 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”.

Relevant Service: as defined in the Children First Act 2015, “means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act]”.

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”.

Specified Procedures: These are the six procedures outlined in the Children First Act 2015 that all providers of relevant services are required to have to keep children safe from harm.

Tusla: Tusla is Ireland’s Child and Family Agency, the lead, statutory organisation for safeguarding children in Ireland.

SECTION 01

Introduction

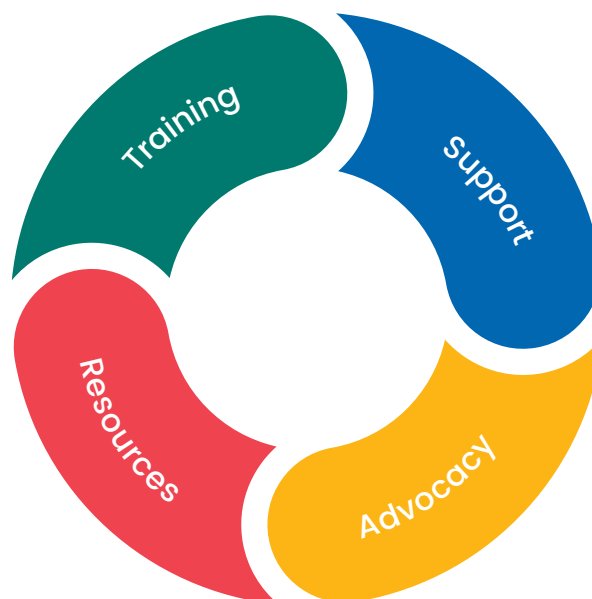


The National Child Protection Programme in the National Youth Council of Ireland is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and is responsible for supporting the youth work sector to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities, including compliance with the Children First Act 2015 legislation and Children First National Guidance 2017.

We do this through the provision of training, support and guidance, advocating on child safeguarding issues that affect the sector, and the development of resource materials such as this toolkit.

This resource was first published in 2012. We are updating it to reflect the changes that have occurred with the enactment of the *Children First Act 2015*, and the update to the *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*. The term “Children First” was originally used in relation to *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, first published in 1999 and reviewed and updated on a number of occasions since then, most recently in 2017. Since the enactment of the Children First Act 2015, the term is now a generic term used to encompass the guidance, the legislation and the implementation of both. This toolkit is aimed at youth clubs, youth work organisations, and organisations providing youth programmes. We hope it supports those of you designing your child safeguarding policy and procedures for the first time and assists those of you who are reviewing your existing child safeguarding policy and procedures.

All organisations that provide services to children are required to develop specific policies and procedures on how to create a safe environment. If your organisation



is the provider of a relevant service (as listed in Schedule 1 “Relevant Services” of the Children First Act 2015), it is a legal requirement to prepare and implement a Child Safeguarding Statement, which should be achieved through the development of comprehensive Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures¹ that detail the procedures in place to mitigate the risks identified in the Child Safeguarding Statement.

1. DCYA, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Dublin: Government Publications, 2017), Chapter 4, Page 35.

The Children First Act 2015 outlines specified procedures that all providers of relevant services must have in place:

1. Procedures in respect of any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child avail of the relevant service (**managing allegations**).
2. Procedures for the **selection and recruitment** of any person as a member of staff of the provider with regard to that person's suitability to work with children.
3. Procedures for the provision of information, and where necessary, instruction and training, to members of staff of the provider in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm (**child protection training**).
4. Procedures for reporting to the Agency by the provider or a member of staff of the provider (whether mandated or otherwise) in accordance with the Act or the guidelines issue by the Minister (**reporting procedures**).
5. Procedures to maintain a list of the persons (if any) in the organisation who are **mandated persons**.
6. Procedures to appoint a **relevant person** for the Child Safeguarding Statement.
7. Procedures to **manage any risk** identified.

To manage any risks identified all organisations should consider the need to have detailed policies and procedures in place on the following:

- Working safely with children
- Code of Behaviour
- Involving parents, young people and children
- Implementing and reviewing the safeguarding strategies

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

As a youth club, service, or organisation you must be able to evidence your child safeguarding policies and procedures and demonstrate your commitment to implementation and review.

This toolkit should be used as a guidance document only, in conjunction with the advice and guidance from Tusla and is adapted from Tusla's guidance document "**Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, 2019**".

The advice contained within this guidance is based on the learnings from child abuse inquiries that have been carried out over the last 25 years to help us better understand how we can protect children and young people from harm and what measures we need to have in place to achieve this. More information on these can be found in **Appendix 5** and is adapted from Tusla's resource *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* (2019). We know that safeguarding children and young people is about more than just reporting child protection and welfare concerns. It's also about ensuring that you and your organisation have all the necessary measures in place to ensure young people are safe while engaging with your service and all the ways in which you assist them to meet their full potential, seek positive outcomes and encourage them to remain involved and actively participating in your service.



Siobhán Laffey

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SECTION 02

What are Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures?



A policy is a statement of intent that contains a system of procedures and guidelines to guide decisions and achieve outcomes. It should clarify roles, relationships and responsibilities and tell people what to do in any given situation, and how to do it in respect of any child safeguarding matter.

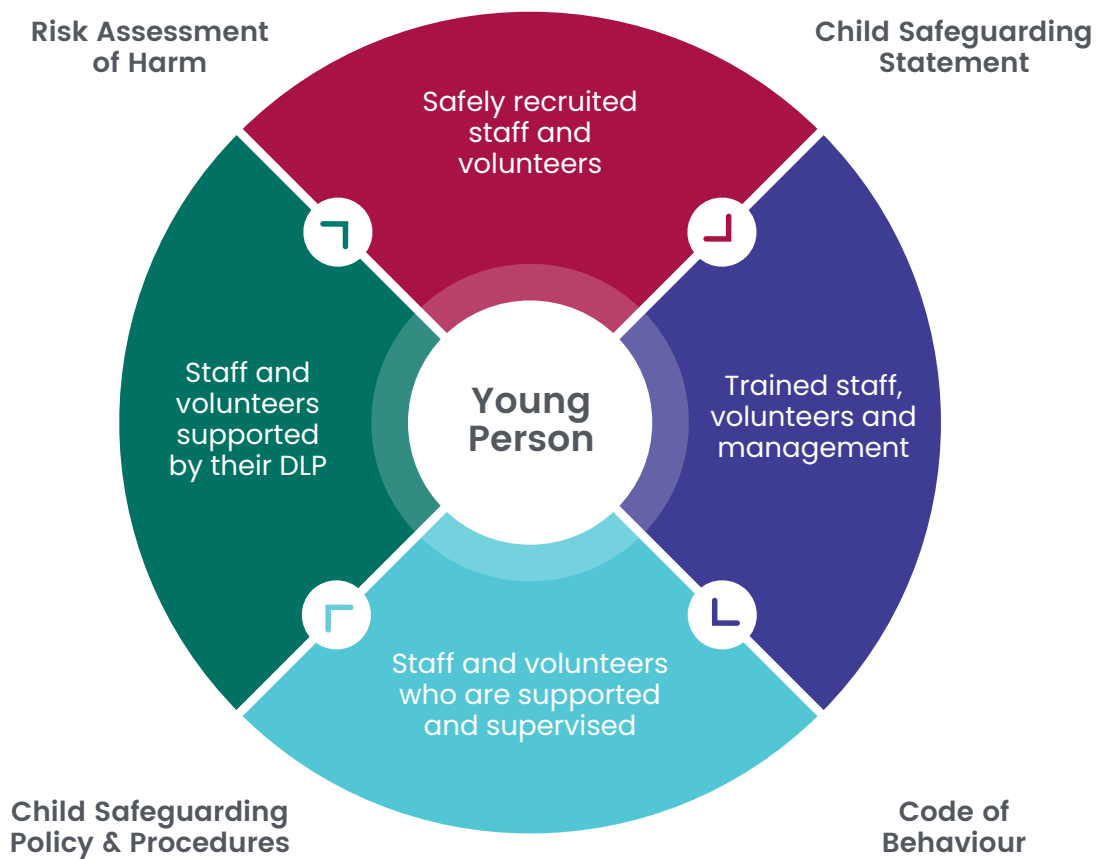
A child safeguarding policy, and the procedures within it, demonstrates your commitment to keeping children and young people safe by outlining all the procedures and guidelines in place to ensure safe and effective services are provided and to ensure staff and volunteers know how to recognise harm, and what steps to take if they have a concern for a child/young person. It is necessary for all youth work organisations to ensure that young people in your service are protected. An effective policy makes sure that all stakeholders in your youth organisation are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are clear on what to do if:

- I'm concerned about a child/young person's welfare.
- I receive a disclosure of abuse from a child/young person.
- I witness a child being abused.
- I witness an incident that puts a child/young person at risk.
- I receive an allegation against a staff member/volunteer.

- I have concerns about another staff member/volunteer's behaviour in relation to child protection and safeguarding.
- I am recruiting staff/volunteers to work with children/young people.
- I want to know what behaviour is appropriate when working with children/young people.
- I want to make an accurate and appropriate response or report relating to any of the above.

Your Child Safeguarding Statement is the lead safeguarding document that identifies all risks of harm (harm as defined in the Children First Act, 2015) a child could experience when attending your service and then outlines all the procedures you have in place to reduce the likelihood of these risks occurring. This includes the specified procedures mentioned in the legislation and any additional procedures you have in place to mitigate any risk identified for your particular organisation. These procedures and guidelines outlined in your Child Safeguarding Statement should all be contained within your Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Children First: A Guide to Implementation of Children First in the Youth Work Sector, NYCI 2021



One of the key principles in Children First that must inform your organisational child safeguarding policy and procedures is that:

“ The welfare of the child is of paramount importance. ”

Remember: All youth work organisations will differ in many ways, and the organisations' structure, policy, and procedures must reflect your own specific context.

SECTION 03

Why do we need Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures?



The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on organisations who are providers of relevant services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement.

This policy 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” (*DCYA, Children First National Guidance on the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 Page 34*).

The Child Safeguarding Statement includes a risk assessment that provides an overview of the measures your organisation has in place to ensure children are protected from harm. Your Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is one policy (you may also be referencing your social media policy, garda vetting policy etc.) that should be referred to in your Child Safeguarding Statement and should contain the detailed procedures

and guidelines for keeping children/young people safe from harm against the risks identified.

In addition to our obligations under the Children First Act (2015) and the Children First National Guidelines (2017), developing Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures shows that youth organisations are actively involved in safeguarding children, young people, volunteers and staff. It represents a genuine commitment to uphold children’s rights in all aspects of your work and highlights youth work values along with some of the key principles in child protection, including that **the safety and welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility**.



The purpose of child safeguarding policy and procedures include:

- Meeting legislative requirements under Children First, 2015 to have specified procedures in place.
- Enabling organisations to reflect your ethos and values in the work you do.
- Encouraging best practice.
- Supporting staff, volunteers, management, young people, and parents or guardians.
- Providing consistency and clarity in how to respond to child protection issues.
- Meeting the specific needs of your organisation's target groups.
- Providing a framework for interagency cooperation.

The benefits of having child safeguarding policy and procedures include:

- It communicates to everyone that your organisation is committed to keeping children/young people safe.
- It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children.
- Clear procedures and guidance help to ensure that there is a prompt response to concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- It demonstrates that your organisation takes its duty of care seriously and complies with the Children First Act and National Guidance.

Child safeguarding policy and procedures support you in developing **a protective and proactive safeguarding culture** within your organisation so that young people are safe and protected and staff/volunteers are encouraged and supported to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people are prioritised.

One of the main objectives of the Children First Act 2015 is to ensure that organisations keep children safe from harm while they are availing of your service or programmes. The legislation and the National Guidance

relate to the obligations of provider's of relevant services to prevent, as far as practicable, deliberate harm or abuse to the children availing of your services. The benefit of carrying out a risk assessment is to prevent abuse occurring, reduce the likelihood of it occurring and to minimise the impacts of abuse by responding effectively. While it's not possible to remove all risks, the procedures and guidelines contained in your Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures should manage and reduce the risks identified in your Child Safeguarding Statement as much as possible.

SECTION 04

What makes a
policy effective?



For a policy to be effective and practical, it must be clear, concise, and accessible to those it relates to. An effective policy is one that achieves its primary purpose and is easily implemented on the ground. In this case, your child safeguarding policy and procedures should provide clear advice and guidance to all staff/volunteers to ensure children/young people are safe from harm and abuse while availing of your service and that everyone is clear on the reporting procedure if there is a concern that a child is being harmed.

To ensure a policy is effective, it is important to reflect on the process needed to both develop and implement your policy. The most effective policies have been developed using a participative approach. This means including representatives from all relevant stakeholders (staff, volunteers, management, board, young people, parents/guardians, and anyone else relevant to your organisation) in every stage of the process including planning, drafting, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing.

The more you can include people in this process, the more likely they are to both understand the policy and use it effectively.

“Your child safeguarding policy and procedures should provide clear advice and guidance to all staff/volunteers to ensure children/young people are safe from harm and abuse while availing of your service and that everyone is clear on the reporting procedure if there is a concern that a child is being harmed.”

There are a number of other considerations to ensure the successful implementation of a policy:

- Is there sufficient support, supervision and training for staff/volunteers etc. to ensure the policy is understood and implemented in their day-to-day work with young people?
- Is there a plan in place to communicate the policy to everyone involved in the organisation and have you thought about how this can be carried out?
 - > We know from experience that simply emailing out a policy does not in any way ensure that staff/volunteers understand it or will implement it on the ground so it is important to consider the ways it can be communicated, who the target groups are, and what are the key sections to highlight with each group.
 - > How can you demonstrate the efforts you are engaging in to ensure staff/volunteers understand the policy and procedures?
- How are you going to measure how effectively your policy is being implemented?
 - > How can you be sure that procedures are being followed?

Child Protection training is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015

Effective policies are:

- Realistic
 - Understood
 - Inclusive
 - Owned
 - Accessible/Visible
- Connected to Practice
 - Reviewed every 24 months or sooner if there is a material change in service provision
 - Updated

Any breach of the child safeguarding policy and procedures must be handled in accordance with your organisation's disciplinary procedures, allegations procedures² (if necessary) and in accordance with any advice or guidance received from the Statutory Authorities (Tusla or An Garda Síochána).

Managing allegations against staff/volunteers is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015

2. NYC's Guidance for the Youth Sector on "**Managing Complaints & Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers**" for advice on procedures to have in place.

SECTION 05

Who is our Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for?



Your child safeguarding policy and procedures are primarily about the protection of children and young people. It also protects everyone involved in youth work such as staff and volunteers while also considering the rights of parents/guardians and the obligations of boards of management.

It should highlight the importance of shared responsibility in relation to child protection. From the outset, the needs of stakeholders should be kept in mind when you are developing child safeguarding policy and procedures that should be accessible to everyone.

You should also consider how you will adapt your child safeguarding policy and procedures so that you can communicate

the relevant information to parents/guardians and children/young people in relation to your child protection responsibilities and commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

See **Appendix 1** for guidance on what information should be included for parents/guardians and children/young people.



When devising a policy for your organisation consider:

- What do we need to include as per the Children First Act 2015?
- What do we need to include as per the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017?
- What is the nature of our service and how can this be reflected in our policy?
- What are the risks to be addressed in the risk assessment conducted to inform the Child Safeguarding Statement?
- What are the specific needs of those who use our service i.e. children and young people?
- What are the needs of our volunteers, staff and management?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of all involved, including parents and board members?
- Does our child safeguarding policy and procedures link with other organisational policies (e.g. social media policy, recruitment and garda vetting policy)?
- What is the purpose of our child safeguarding policy and procedures? What need is it meeting? What is improving because of it?
- Does it reflect the ethos and values of our organisation?
- Is it compliant with other relevant guidelines, legislation or standards?
- What resources can support me in the process of developing or reviewing my policy? (e.g. Appendix 2: **NALA's Plain English Checklist for Documents**, Tusla's resource **Child Safeguarding: A Guide to Policy, Procedure and Practice, 2019**, NYC's resource on **Working Safely in a Youth Club**).

Your child safeguarding policy and procedures are for:

- Children and young people
- Volunteers, staff, management
- Parents/legal guardians
- Tutors/instructors/guest speakers
- Sessional staff/relief staff/contract staff
- Students on placement
- Other organisations that you partner with

SECTION 06

How do we make our
policy accessible?



We have highlighted what makes child safeguarding policy and procedures effective in relation to the planning and development stages of the process. To be truly effective a policy must be understood and implemented in practice by staff, volunteers, and management.

To achieve this, it must be communicated effectively across all relevant groups. Making your policy accessible to all stakeholders is crucial if you want a policy that impacts positively on the day-to-day work of your organisation.

This can present some challenges. Ensuring the policy is effectively communicated is an ongoing task and is achieved by

maintaining its relevance through consistent monitoring and reviewing. This section will help to provide you with some practical ideas for how to go about producing user-friendly child safeguarding policy and procedures which is easily understood and appropriate to all stakeholders.

Strategies for communicating your policy to staff/volunteers:

1 Induction

All new staff and volunteers should be given a copy of your child safeguarding policy and procedures to review as part of the induction process.

- New staff and volunteers should then be provided with an opportunity to seek clarification on any aspect of the policy and certain key elements should be highlighted with them and reviewed by the line manager (e.g. the code of behaviour, reporting procedures).
- Child safeguarding training should also form part of the induction process and highlight key areas of the policy for staff and volunteers.
- How do you demonstrate that you have communicated your policy and guidelines? Do staff/volunteers sign a declaration that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by policy, procedures, code of behaviour etc? Where and how is this recorded?

Strategies for communicating your policy to staff/volunteers:

2	Supervision	<p>Supervision is an opportunity to reflect on current work practices, discuss any challenges and successes, and check in with staff and volunteers on implementing the policy and procedures in their work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to dedicate time during supervision for discussion on the practicalities of implementing the policy and procedures as this will highlight how useable the policy is in practice and will also demonstrate how familiar the staff member or volunteer is with the key elements.
3	Team Meetings	<p>Team meetings provide staff and volunteers with a forum to discuss collective issues during the implementation process, to clarify aspects of the policy if needed, to highlight what is working well, run through scenarios and to conduct refresher sessions on elements of the policy if this has been identified as a need.</p>
4	Training	<p>Staff and volunteers need to understand and realise the importance and purpose of organisational policies and procedures. Child Protection training should be arranged internally so that your specific organisational child safeguarding policy and procedures can be incorporated into the training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If this is not possible due to staff or volunteer numbers, you should provide internal training on the policy, calling out the specific elements that are unique to your service (E.g. the code of behaviour). This is very useful in helping staff and volunteers understand from the outset, the organisation's commitment to protecting the safety and welfare of children and the ways in which your child safeguarding policy and procedures supports everyone to do this.
5	Materials	<p>Producing materials (leaflets, posters, webpages, videos, social media posts etc) based on the policy and procedures that spotlight specific aspects of it can help to highlight issues of particular importance to staff and volunteers and remind them of their responsibilities. Some examples are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include safeguarding responsibilities in all role and job descriptions. Devise a code of behaviour that outlines rights, responsibilities, and appropriate behaviours, and produce posters that are publicly displayed on the premises and in staff areas. Display the DLPs and Deputy DLPs contact information prominently on site and explain their role. Create visual posters demonstrating the steps in the reporting procedure for staff/volunteers. Create visual posters on the categories of abuse and indicators to look out for that can be displayed in staff areas.

Child Protection training is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015

Strategies for communicating your policy to parents/guardians and children/young people:	
1	<p>Parent-friendly version of the policy</p> <p>This version can include key messages aimed specifically at parents/guardians in relation to your child safeguarding policy, procedures, and practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, parents/guardians could also be involved in producing this document. • Providing parents/guardians with a copy of your Child Safeguarding Statement and your Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures when their child enrolls, sends a clear message that you take child protection seriously and are transparent in how you achieve this.
2	<p>Youth-friendly version of the policy</p> <p>This can take the form of leaflets, posters, social media posts, and/or videos that are written in youth friendly language, taking into consideration levels of understanding and literacy among your young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally, children and young people should be involved in the process of drafting your policy whether through planned workshops or various other creative activities. • Children and young people can offer great insights on their safety and welfare, so it is important to hear what they have to say. • It is also invaluable in terms of communicating to them their rights and their responsibilities in relation to creating a safe and happy environment for everyone. They will have more ownership of the policy if they are involved in creating it.
3	<p>Membership forms</p> <p>Can include key elements of your policy that parents should know. Some organisations include a QR code on consent forms or membership application forms that will bring parents/guardians to the organisation's webpage that contains their child safeguarding policy and procedures, child safeguarding statement, code of behaviour and complaints policy.</p>
4	<p>Open nights</p> <p>This is an opportunity to inform parents/guardians about all aspects of the service including, the safeguarding measures you have in place to ensure their child is safe and protected from harm while engaging with your service.</p>
5	<p>Public display</p> <p>Every organisation is required by law to display their Child Safeguarding Statement. It is also good practice to display your code of behaviour and youth friendly versions of other key elements of your child safeguarding policy and procedures such as who they can talk to onsite/in the organisation (DLP information). This is a good way of raising awareness of child protection and can help encourage staff, volunteers, and young people of the importance of a safe environment.</p>

To be fully transparent and accountable, you should proactively inform parents/guardians of your safeguarding measures and responsibilities and share information with them in various formats based on their needs.

SECTION 07

How do we write Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures?



Writing your child safeguarding policy and procedures does not have to be a daunting task and should not be the responsibility of just one person. The process that has been described so far is aimed at making this task straightforward and achievable.

A good first step is to establish a working group that represents key stakeholders who can input into the policy content. It's also a good idea to start by identifying needs based on the target audience and including all stakeholders in the development and implementation process will help in realising this goal.

Below is a guide that takes you through a step-by-step approach for developing a child protection policy.

- 1 Identify the "named person" ✓
- 2 Establish a policy working group ✓
- 3 Clarify the present position within your organisation ✓
- 4 Identify the procedures that need to be addressed in the policy ✓
- 5 Appoint a Designated Liaison Person ✓
- 6 Drafting the Policy ✓
- 7 Pilot the policy ✓
- 8 Ratify the policy ✓
- 9 Implement the policy ✓
- 10 Monitor and evaluate the policy ✓

1. Identify the “named person”

The “named person” is the person responsible for ensuring the work your organisation needs to do to meet its responsibilities under Children First legislation and Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children gets done. For small organisations, this may be someone who is already in a key position and has an overview of the activities and people working in your organisation. The work associated with implementing the requirements of Children First will only be achieved if someone is given lead responsibility and if that person is given sufficient support and priority from your organisation to fulfil this role³.

2. Establish a policy working group

The working group should be made up of a small group of people who broadly represent the different levels and areas within the organisation (key stakeholders). A whole organisational approach to safeguarding is the most effective way to operate and ensure safeguarding procedures are embedded across all teams and departments so having broad representation is important to ensure the success of implementing your child safeguarding policy and procedures.

This group will consult with the wider organisation, as well as key informants external to the organisation, about the development of the policy. The group will also draft, review feedback, re-draft and produce the final version of the policy.

3. Clarify the present position within your organisation

This step will help you to get a clear picture of your organisation and your practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding. It will involve consulting with all the relevant stakeholders such as employees/volunteers, senior management, boards of management, parents/guardians, children and young people, Tusla, An Garda Síochána, other local services working with children and young people, and umbrella/national membership bodies (where required).

The consultation should focus on what is working well, including any relevant existing policies or procedures, and identifying where there are gaps. This should be measured against recognised good practice in child protection and safeguarding (as identified in Children First, and Tusla’s Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, and any other associated documents).

4. Identify the procedures that need to be addressed in the policy

It is important that your organisation has procedures so that everyone knows how to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding. Section 8 of this guide includes more detailed information on what should be included in your child safeguarding policy and procedures and section 10 provides a checklist/self-assessment tool that can be used to audit your organisation and identify gaps.

3. Tusla, *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* (Dublin, Child and Family Agency, 2019) Page 12.

The working group should clarify issues such as reporting. For example:

- How does a concern about possible abuse of a child get reported and who has responsibility for managing the process?
- What practice does the organisation have in place for mandated reporting, are mandated persons reporting jointly with the DLP or submitting the report to Tusla and sharing a copy with the DLP?
- What happens if the DLP is unavailable? Do staff and volunteers know who else they can contact for advice/guidance on reporting?
- Who is responsible for maintaining the list of mandated persons and informing them of their legal responsibilities?
- Who has access to child protection reports and records and where are these stored?

There may be informal procedures in place, but these have not been written down.

5. Appoint a Designated Liaison Person

All organisations should have a named Designated Liaison Person (DLP) (as recommended in the Children First guidance 2017) who is responsible for ensuring that the child safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented and followed. The role and responsibilities of the DLP should be clearly outlined in the policy. Depending on the size and structure of your organisation, you may have more than one DLP. It is good practice to have a deputy DLP (regardless of the size of your organisation) to provide advice, guidance, and support in the absence of the DLP. The contact details of the DLP(s) and deputy DLPs should be shared widely across your organisation.

6. Drafting the policy

First, agree the target audience for the policy. Then agree the content and format for the policy. Assign roles and responsibilities regarding the writing of the policy.

Once the first draft has been completed, circulate it to the relevant stakeholders for comment and feedback. At this point, consider the production of user-friendly formats for children, young people, and their parents/guardians.

7. Pilot the policy

Once the final draft of the policy has been agreed, disseminate it as appropriate for comment on its usefulness and content. Pilot the policy using relevant case studies/scenarios to test its usefulness.

Make any changes necessary to improve the policy.

Ensure that the legal implications of the policy have been approved (This may involve getting legal advice regarding certain aspects of the policy, for example, procedures for responding to allegations against staff).

8. Ratify the policy

Senior Management/Board of Management should review the content and when satisfied officially sign off on the policy.

9. Implement the policy

To ensure the policy is successfully implemented it is important to develop an implementation plan for rolling out the policy.

This may involve:

- Disseminating the policy to relevant stakeholders both internally and externally.
- Plan to hold briefing sessions on the policy for relevant stakeholders (as appropriate) that will highlight key areas of the policy in particular.
- Plan training sessions on the use of the policy for relevant personnel.

10. Monitor and evaluate the policy

This step is vitally important for supporting the implementation of your policy and for ensuring that the policy stays relevant, up-to-date and compliant with any changes to legislation or child protection guidelines. You need to agree what monitoring and evaluation measures are appropriate to support the implementation of the policy.

An agreed date for a formal review of the policy should be noted in the policy document itself along with the name of the person responsible for overseeing this task. Including safeguarding on meeting agendas at board of management and senior management level can also ensure this item comes up for review annually and adding it to the work plans of the relevant staff members will also ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation is carried out at regular intervals. Embedding these measures across your entire organisation is important to ensure a whole organisational approach to safeguarding becomes part of the culture of your organisation.



SECTION 08

What should be in our Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures?



Your child safeguarding policy and procedures should be tailored to suit your organisation's specific needs.

However, there are a number of key elements that should be included, including the specified procedures that are referred to in your Child Safeguarding Statement as per the requirements of the Children First Act 2015.

Important:

All child safeguarding policies and procedures must be based on the **Children First Act 2015** and **Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017**.

Suggested key elements to include in your child safeguarding policy and procedures:

(This list is not exhaustive)

Key Element	Details
Declaration of Guiding Principles	Who you are (beliefs, values and codes of your organisation), what activities/services you provide, commitment to comply with legislation and policy, target audience of the policy, commitment to implementation and review. This should reflect the declaration of guiding principles in your Child Safeguarding Statement.
Key roles in safeguarding	Roles and responsibilities related to child safeguarding: Named persons, Designated Liaison Persons, Mandated Persons, Provider of a relevant service, Relevant Person
Specified Procedure as per Children First Act 2015: Management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers by a child availing of your service	Procedures that outline the steps to be taken if an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, including proportionate responses and actions to take to mitigate risk while the statutory investigation is carried out, steps for internal review following the statutory investigation (more guidance can be found in NYC's resource: Guidance for the Youth Sector on Managing Complaints and Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers, 2022).

Key Element	Details
<p>Specified Procedure as per Children First Act 2015: Safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to work with children (you may have a separate vetting policy which could be referenced in the policy)</p>	<p>Procedures that outline all the steps in the recruitment process to ensure as far as possible that suitable people are recruited to work with children and young people in your organisation. Include garda vetting, reference checks, interviews, applications, etc.</p>
<p>Specified Procedure as per Children First Act 2015: Provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information including the identification of the occurrence of harm.</p>	<p>Procedures that outline your training strategy for the organisation that includes training matrix (what training is required/mandatory for all staff/volunteer roles), induction training and what's included, refresher periods, training on internal policies and procedures etc.</p>
<p>Specified Procedure as per Children First Act 2015: Reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla.</p>	<p>Guidance on reasonable grounds for concern, definition of harm, definitions of abuse and indicators of child abuse and neglect as per Children First Guidance 2017, dealing with disclosures, retrospective disclosures, mandated reporting, mandated assisting, informing parents/guardians.</p>
<p>Specified Procedure as per Children First Act 2015: Maintaining a list of mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.</p>	<p>Procedures outlining how mandated persons will be identified within your organisation, the requirements to write to them informing them of their legal responsibilities, and the process for maintaining this list including who will be responsible, where it will be stored, who will have access and how it will be reviewed and kept up-to-date.</p>
<p>Specified Procedure as per Children First Act 2015: Appointing a relevant person for your Child Safeguarding Statement.</p>	<p>Procedures outlining the process for appointing a relevant person for your Child Safeguarding Statement including relevant criteria etc.</p>

Key Element	Details
Confidentiality	Guiding principle (“Need to know basis”), limits to confidentiality and the proportionate provision of information to other agencies.
Sharing information with young people, parents/guardians, and other agencies	Guidance on what information should be shared with parents/guardians and young people, how this information should be shared, and who should be sharing it.
Record keeping, access to and storage of information	Guidance for recording information (how to keep accurate, concise, factual reports), how information should be documented (unbiased, objective records that describe observations and that do not evaluate or reach conclusions), how do we record concerns that don’t yet meet reasonable grounds for concern, but which may show patterns over time that will meet the threshold for reporting. Outline who has access to these records, how they are stored securely, the chain of access in the event the DLP is unavailable.
Code of Behaviour	Helps workers to focus on supporting children and young people’s rights and child-centred practice in their everyday work. It should set out boundaries, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, the duty to report breaches of the code, methods for communicating it to all staff, volunteers, young people and parents/guardians.
Safe and Effective Ways of Working	Keeping a register of children/young people availing of your services with important key details, maintaining good record keeping (attendance, accidents, incidents, consent forms, complaints etc), health and safety responsibilities, accidents and incidents, safe supervision, ratios, code of behaviour for children/young people, one-to-one working, using external facilities, managing trips away (planning, permissions, transport, accommodation, activities, preparation for young people, communications to parents/guardians, emergency procedures, monitoring and evaluation during the trip).
Online Safety	Procedures for keeping young people safe online when they’re attending your service, and procedures for engaging with young people using online mediums or social media platforms etc.

Key Element	Details
Anti-Bullying	Procedures for responding to bullying claims and how these will be managed by the service.
Complaints (You may have a separate complaints policy so you might just be referring to this policy in your safeguarding guidelines)	Definitions of complaints, complaints process (informal, formal), creating an open, transparent, and supportive environment, breaches of the code of professional standards/ethics, poor practice, record keeping and reporting, disciplinary process, appeals process, and communication of the procedure to staff, volunteers, young people, parents/guardians.
Supervision and Support for Staff and Volunteers	Management and supervision of workers and volunteers is key to keeping children safe as it helps to maintain best practice and ensure the guidelines in the policy are being followed. Include functions of supervision in your organisation, the models available (informal check-ins, staff meetings, one-to-ones, probation periods, annual reviews) etc.
Working in partnership with parents/guardians and young people	Sharing policy and procedures with parents/guardians, children and young people, ways to empower children and young people, creating ways for them to participate and be heard, and communications strategy with parents/guardians and young people.
Working in partnership with other organisations	What safeguarding requirements are outlined in your agreements, details of safeguarding responsibilities and roles of each organisation, reporting procedures etc.
Implementing, monitoring, and reviewing your guiding principles and child safeguarding policy and procedures	Implementation plan, review plan and procedures for conducting this, processes in place to both trigger and then carry out the process for monitoring, review and implementation – this is an ongoing process and not a one-off event.

SECTION 09

How do we know if our
Child Safeguarding Policy
and Procedures are working?



Child safeguarding policy and procedures must remain a work in progress to ensure that it is kept up-to-date and adapted as needs arise or change.

As your organisation and work practice evolves over time and adapts to suit the changing needs of the young people you work with, so must your policy be adapted and updated. This section provides you with a template for helping you to make the most out of your policy document and to improve its effectiveness through simple monitoring and evaluation techniques.

Policy evaluation questions can include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who devised the policy and how was it created?• When was the policy last reviewed?• What mechanisms do we have in place to trigger the review process?• What need is this policy meeting? Why do we have this policy?• What benefits does it provide? How does it improve our work?• What challenges does it present?• Have we used the policy? How often? How effective was the policy when we used it? What worked? What did not work?• Is the policy accessible to all stakeholders in terms of | <ul style="list-style-type: none">understanding, visibility, and relevance?• If so, what parts and what was the outcome?• If not, why not?• How are we monitoring the effectiveness of this policy? (e.g. proof it against a scenario, or carry out a review following an incident or a report to evaluate what worked, why did it work, were any gaps identified?)• What, if anything needs to be changed?• What, if any, changes have taken place (organisational, national, legislation, policy)? |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Examples of methods for evaluating your policy:

- Staff/volunteer questionnaires, briefings
- Children/Young people's questionnaires or workshops
- Parents'/Guardians' questionnaire or briefing.
- Incident Reviews
- Audits (Is documentation being completed? Are processes being followed?)
- Onsite visits (are procedures implemented on the ground, is information displayed prominently)

Feedback can be formal or informal or a combination of these. It is worthwhile to ask children/young people and their parents/guardians if they have any suggestions or any feedback on the service.



SECTION 10

Checklist/Self-Assessment Tool for Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures



Checklist/Self-Assessment Tool for Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Important:

This document is intended to be used as a guide and contains the key elements that should be in all child safeguarding policies. It should then be adapted to each organisations own specific context to include all additional procedures relevant to your service.

This guidance tool has been adapted from Tusla's *"Children First Self-Assessment Tool to Support Implementation of Children First Act 2015 and Children First National Guidance 2017 for Organisations"* and Appendix 3 of Tusla's *"Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedures and Practice"*.

It is an update to the checklist that is provided in NYCI's resource *"Children First: A Guide to the Implementation of Children First in the Youth Work Sector"*.

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Do you have a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) that is in line with the Children First Act 2015?		
Does your CSS list the procedures specified in the Children First Act 2015?		
Does your CSS include procedures to mitigate each risk identified in your risk assessment, including procedures for online safety?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Are all of the above procedures available on request?		
Have you submitted your CSS to Tusla's Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (csscu@tusla.ie) voluntarily for review and feedback?		
Guiding Principles		
Declaration of guiding principles is in place? Does it include your intention to keep children/young people safe and your commitment to the underlying principle that the welfare of the child is paramount (paramountcy principle)?		
Is the name of your organisation and the services/activities you provide to children and young people listed?		
Your declaration of guiding principles specifies who they apply to (e.g. volunteers, staff, management, students, contractors, tutors, seasonal staff)?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Is your declaration of guiding principles communicated to children, young people, parents/guardians, workers and volunteers?		
Are the geographical boundaries outlined (e.g. applicable on-site, on outings, online, trips away etc.)?		
Do you make reference to the legislation and guidelines that have informed your policy development?		
Do you include a reference to the review period for your policy and procedures?		
Key Personnel		
A named person is appointed?		
The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and deputy DLP (DDL) are appointed?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
The role and responsibilities of the DLP/DDLP are outlined?		
The role and responsibilities of Mandated Persons is outlined?		
A procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons is in place?		
Responding to and Reporting child protection and welfare concerns		
Guidance on reasonable grounds for concern is included?		
Definitions, signs and indicators of child abuse as per Children First Guidance 2017?		
Do your reporting procedures clearly outline the responsibility to report child abuse, neglect and welfare concerns?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Do your reporting procedures outline the responsibility of mandated persons to report child protection concerns that have reached or exceeded the threshold of “harm”?		
Do your reporting procedures include contact details for the Out of Hours Social Work teams for Mandated Persons?		
Do your reporting procedures clearly outline the steps to follow in reporting child protection or welfare concerns?		
Do your reporting procedures provide guidance on where to seek advice if unsure whether a concern meets the threshold for reporting?		
Do your reporting procedures reference using the Tusla Portal to submit reports of child protection concerns?		
Do your procedures clearly outline where workers/volunteers can seek advice and guidance or the DLP or DDLP is not available or if it's “out of hours”?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Do you have a list of relevant contact numbers available for staff and volunteers to seek advice/support on child protection concerns? (eg: Tusla duty social work teams, the local Garda Station, DLP and DDLP).		
Is there guidance on dealing with disclosures?		
Is there guidance on dealing with adult disclosures of abuse that occurred in their childhood (retrospective disclosures)?		
Dealing with Allegations Against Staff/Volunteers/Peers		
Are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against workers, volunteers, or management included in your policy?		
Do your procedures identify named persons for dealing with allegations of child protection and welfare in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child? • The staff member/volunteer? 		
Do your procedures identify who will deal with allegations of child abuse against the DLP? The deputy DLP? The CEO? Members of the Board?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Do your procedures include steps/measures that consider the principle of paramountcy and principle of natural justice e.g. the rights of the worker, volunteer, or young person to know about the allegation and their right to respond?		
<p>Do your procedures outline the following considerations in relation to the protection and welfare of children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current level of risk to children/ young people in the service if the subject of the allegation remains in their role? • What are the procedures for notifying and liaising with Tusla and An Garda Síochána to ensure there is no impediment to their investigation? • What steps do we engage with to decide on what is a proportionate response i.e. protective action that may be taken, additional supervision, suspension of the worker/volunteer pending assessment and investigation of the allegation? • How do we make decisions, where appropriate, to inform the parents/guardians? What informs that decision-making process? Where can we seek guidance? What are the potential risks involved if informing or not informing? What practical measures should we consider when planning to tell parents? 		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Do your procedures outline support measures for the staff member, volunteer, or young person who is the subject of the allegation?		
Do your procedures outline support measures for the child/young person who made the allegation or any other staff/volunteers who were involved?		
Is there guidance on dealing with adult disclosures of abuse that occurred in their childhood (retrospective disclosures)?		
Do the procedures include how to respond to allegations of abuse and/or breaches of the code of behaviour by another young person?		
Are there clear reporting procedures to the statutory bodies for both the young person who has made the allegation and the young person who is the subject of the allegation?		
Are there guidelines to put in place proportionate/protective measures for both young persons pending assessment and investigation of the allegations?		
Do your procedures outline support measures for the child/young people or anyone else who is involved?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Code of Behaviour		
Does your policy include a code of behaviour for workers and volunteers which specifies acceptable and unacceptable practice and behaviours with regard to working with children/young people?		
<p>Does it refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate adult supervision and ratios • Appropriate relationships and boundaries between leaders and young people • Appropriate physical contact • Appropriate language • Appropriate behaviour when addressing challenges in children/young people's behaviour • Procedures for dealing with bullying • Considerations for off-site activities and overnight trips away • Considerations for one-to-one/outreach/detached youth work • Safe use of technology. Including internet use and mobile technology • Safe use of transport • Consideration for working with children with additional needs or vulnerable young people 		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Does it reference the responsibility for all workers and volunteers to report concerns that they may have about a colleague practices or suspected breaches of the code of behaviour?		
Are there disciplinary and appeals processes in place?		
Policies and Procedures in place for safe management of activities		
Do you have procedures for managing accidents and incidents?		
Do you make reference to your Complaints Policy?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
<p>Do your procedures outline the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping a register of children/young people availing of your services with important key details • maintaining good record keeping (attendance, accidents, incident, consent forms, complaints etc) • health and safety responsibilities • safe supervision • ratios • one-to-one working • using external facilities • partnership agreements • online safety • anti-bullying procedures • managing trips away (planning, permissions, transport, accommodation, activities, preparation for young people, communications to parents/guardians, emergency procedures, monitoring and evaluation during the trip). 		
Confidentiality & Sharing of Information		
Does your policy reference the limits on confidentiality and are these communicated to children/young people?		
Do you reference the principle of sharing information on a “need-to-know basis” in the best interest of the child ?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Do you outline that sharing information regarding child protection and welfare concerns with the statutory authorities is not a breach of confidentiality?		
Is their guidance on informing parents of concerns that need to be reported to Tusla, including instances where parents should not be informed?		
Is there guidance for sharing information with parents/guardians and children?		
Are there systems in place for communicating information internally and externally to other organisations in relation to child protection and welfare issues?		
Record Keeping, Access and Storage of Information		
Is there guidance on record keeping, access to and storage of information relating to child protection concerns?		
Do you reference the requirement to ensure records are up-to-date and regularly reviewed?		
Is there a clear system in place for monitoring concerns and recording this information?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Are your recording systems safe and confidential?		
Is there a process in place for storing information securely?		
Is access to the information clearly defined and on a “need-to-know basis”?		
Is there a clear procedure in place for archiving old information?		
Recruitment & Selection		
A recruitment and selection procedure is in place with regard to a person’s suitability to work with children/young people and applies to all workers and volunteers?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
<p>Does it reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job/role descriptions? • Application process? • Advertising process? • Interviews • Garda Vetting • Verification of identity and qualifications • Selection process, assessment of suitability • Reference checks • Induction and probationary period • Training needs • Ongoing support and supervision 		
Is there a mechanism in place that triggers the re-vetting process for staff and volunteers at least every three years?		
Support, Supervision and Training		
Is there a supervision policy in your organisation that outlines the purpose, benefits and format of supervision with staff and/or volunteers?		
Are there appropriate supervision mechanisms in place (formal and informal, one-to-one and group)?		
Does the policy outline the training strategy for child safeguarding training based on a training needs analysis?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Does the policy outline the requirement for all staff/ volunteers to attend and complete safeguarding training relevant to their role in your organisation?		
Do you have a training matrix that identifies what child protection and safeguarding training is required for each role in your organisation?		
Does the policy state that all staff and volunteers are required to complete induction training and outline what should be included in induction training (including your child safeguarding policy and procedures, child safeguarding statement etc)?		
Does your policy outline how your organisation will demonstrate that you are meeting your safeguarding training requirements?		
Is there a record keeping system in place for logging the safeguarding training that staff/volunteers attend and the relevant details for this?		
Is there a mechanism that triggers the process for ensuring training is refreshed at the agreed intervals stated in your policy?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Sharing your guiding principles and child safeguarding policy and procedures and involving parents/guardians, children and young people		
Do you have a process in place for communicating the guiding principles and child safeguarding policy and principles to parents/guardians and young people?		
Have children and young people been made aware of their right to be protected, consulted, and treated with respect? How can you demonstrate this?		
Has a communications policy been developed and is it on display?		
Has a policy on working in partnership with parents/guardians been developed and is it on display?		
Has your complaints policy been communicated to parents/guardians and young people and how is this information displayed?		

Key Elements of Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Yes – List supporting evidence including how this has been communicated and implemented	No/Partially – indicate: 1. What actions are required 2. Person Responsible 3. Date to be completed
Implementing, monitoring, and reviewing your guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures		
Have you created an Implementation Plan for your guiding principles and child safeguarding policy and procedures?		
Does your policy outline the process that triggers and plans regular reviews of your guiding principles and child safeguarding policy and procedures?		
Are there processes in place and methods for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the implementation of you policy and procedures and getting feedback from staff, volunteers, children, young people, and parents/guardians?		

SECTION 11

Appendices



11.1 Appendix 1A: Suggested Information to include in child safeguarding policy and procedures for Parents/Guardians

Important:

Remember, this policy and procedures should be written in a manner which is appropriate to your service and to your parents/guardians and should be based on the *Children First Act 2015* and the Children First National Guidance.

Below are some of the items you should communicate to parents/guardians when they enrol their child in your service.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 What can parents/guardians expect from this club/service/organisation?</p> | <p>11 Explain the policy on confidentiality, including sharing information on a “need-to-know” basis and how personal information is treated with the utmost respect and sensitivity in line with GDPR and stored securely.</p> |
| <p>2 The safety and welfare of children is of paramount importance.</p> | <p>12 Outline your organisation’s legal obligation to report child protection concerns, allegations, disclosures etc, to Tusla or the Gardai.</p> |
| <p>3 Consent from parents/guardians is required.</p> | <p>13 Your organisation’s reporting requirements under Children First and their right to be informed unless it’s inappropriate to the situation.</p> |
| <p>4 Specific consent will be requested for trips, outings, overnights etc.</p> | <p>14 Provide the contact details for the DLP and Deputy DLP.</p> |
| <p>5 Encourage parents/guardians to be involved, including the reasons why.</p> | <p>15 Outline your anti-bullying policy and approach to bullying allegations.</p> |
| <p>6 Required to provide contact details, emergency contact details, child’s details (medical details, allergies, needs etc).</p> | <p>16 Outline your commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.</p> |
| <p>7 Outline the safe recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers.</p> | <p>17 How to make a complaint and who the named person is they can contact (including contact details).</p> |
| <p>8 Outline the organisation’s training, policies, and code of behaviour.</p> | |
| <p>9 Inform parents/guardians of accidents/incidents involving their child.</p> | |
| <p>10 Parents/guardians’ right to access information on their child that is stored/held by your organisation.</p> | |

11.2 Appendix 1B: Suggested Information to include in child safeguarding policy and procedures for Children/Young People

Important:

Remember, this policy should be written in a manner which is appropriate to your service and to your children/young people and should be based on the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First National Guidance.

Below are some of the items you should communicate to children/young people when they join your service.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 What can children/young people expect from this club/service/organisation?</p> | <p>10 Let children/young people know that if someone is hurting them or if we're worried about their safety, we may have to talk to someone who can help (explain the statutory authorities in age appropriate ways).</p> |
| <p>2 Their safety and welfare is of paramount importance.</p> | <p>11 Communicate what confidentiality means in your service and the limits to this.</p> |
| <p>3 Staff and volunteers should be recruited safely, trained, and follow a code of behaviour.</p> | <p>12 Let them know their personal information will be treated with respect and shared only on a "need-to-know" basis and break down what "need-to-know" means.</p> |
| <p>4 Children/young people's code of behaviour.</p> | <p>13 Outline your commitment to tell them the truth and explain everything as much as you can to them.</p> |
| <p>5 Children/Young people should be treated with respect.</p> | <p>14 Outline your anti-bullying policy and approach to bullying allegations.</p> |
| <p>6 Children/Young people have a right to feel safe and secure in your service.</p> | <p>15 Outline your commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.</p> |
| <p>7 Children/Young people have a right to be heard and involved in decision-making in your service.</p> | <p>16 How to make a complaint, and who the named person is they can contact (including contact details).</p> |
| <p>8 Outline what children/young people should do if they are worried or concerned about anything and who they should talk to.</p> | |
| <p>9 Highlight that if someone is hurting them in anyway, they should tell someone they trust and remind them it's never okay for someone to hurt them and it's not their fault.</p> | |

11.3 Appendix 2: NALA Plain English Checklist

Checklist for documents



This checklist offers a quick way for you to review a letter, leaflet, booklet or short report to see if it uses plain English and is easy to follow. Not all questions will apply to every document, but try to answer 'yes' as much as possible to the questions that do apply.

	Yes	No
Language, punctuation and grammar		
1 Does the document use 'you' and 'we', where possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Does it use the active voice most of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Does it keep technical terms and abbreviations to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Does it define any necessary terms and abbreviations clearly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Does it keep 'corporate jargon' to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Does it avoid Latin and French phrases and Latin abbreviations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Does it use the same term for the same concept throughout?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Does it have an average of 15 to 20 words in each sentence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Does it use the simplest verb tense possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Does it avoid abstract nouns where possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Does it use correct punctuation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Do nouns and verbs agree (singular noun with singular verb, for example)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure		
13 Does it organise information according to the reader's needs and interests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 Does it use informative headings or questions to break up text?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 Does it include a natural flow from one point to the next?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 Are paragraphs relatively short?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 Does it use bullet point lists for detailed or complicated information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Page design		
18 Does it avoid underlining, groups of italics and unnecessary capital letters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 Is text in a readable typeface (font), aligned to the left and 1.5 spaced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 Are images, charts or blocks of colour, if any, clear and relevant to the text?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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11.4 Appendix 3: Additional Resources

The table below lists a number of resources that have been mentioned throughout this document where you can seek additional advice and guidance on designing and reviewing your child safeguarding policy and procedures.

Additional Resources	
Your national organisation/umbrella body (where applicable) may be able to provide you with information and guidelines on policies and procedures.	
Tusla's Children First Information and Advice Officers provide information and advice to organisations on child protection and welfare. Contact details are provided in Appendix 4 .	
<p>The National Child Protection Programme in the National Youth Council of Ireland provides training, guidance and resources to youth work organisations on a wide range of child protection and safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Visit our website www.childprotection.ie for more information or</p> <p>Contact: siobhan@nyci.ie</p>	
Tusla	Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2nd Edition, 2019
Tusla	Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement, 2017
Tusla	A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection Concerns, 2017
Tusla	Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff, 2017
DCYA	Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017
NYCI	Children First: A Guide to Implementation of Children First in the Youth Work Sector, 2021
NYCI	Working Safely in a Youth Club, 2021
NYCI	Guidance for the Youth Sector on Managing Complaints and Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers, 2022

11.5

Appendix 4: Contact Details for Children First Information & Advice Officers

At the time of publication these were the most up-to-date details on Tusla's website. To ensure you have the most accurate and update contact information please visit: www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/children-first-information-and-advice-officers/

Area	Contact Name	Contact Email/Number
Dublin Mid Leinster Dublin South City, Dublin South West, Dublin West, Kildare, West Wicklow	Jan Perrin Edwina Flavin	Jan.perrin@tusla.ie Edwina.flavin@tusla.ie
Dublin Mid Leinster Dublin South (Dun Laoghaire), Dublin South East, Wicklow West Clare, Limerick, Tipperary North	Laura Nee	Laura.nee@tusla.ie
Dublin Mid Leinster Longford, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly (midlands area) South Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, South Tipperary	Charney Weitzman	Charney.weitzman@tusla.ie
Dublin North East Cavan/Monaghan	Deirdre Horan Martin	Deirdrem.horanmartin@tusla.ie
Dublin North East Meath, Louth	Kathryn Morris	Kathryn.morris@tusla.ie
Dublin North East Dublin North, Dublin North City	Edel O'Connor	Edel.oconnor@tusla.ie
South Cork, Kerry	Margaret Fitzgerald Maureen Crowley	Margareta.fitzgerald@tusla.ie Maureen.crowley@tusla.ie
West Roscommon, Galway, Mayo	Boyd Dodds	Roisin.moyles@tusla.ie
West Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, West Cavan	Noreen Herron	Noreen.herron@tusla.ie

11.6 Appendix 5: Learning from Inquiries

The information below has been adapted from Appendix 4 of Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2019)*.

Inquiries:

- The Kilkenny Incest Investigation (1993)
- The Report of a committee of inquiry (1995) "Kelly – A Child is Dead"
- The West of Ireland Farmer Case (1998)
- The Report of the independent inquiry into matters relating to child sexual abuse in swimming (1998)
- The Ferns Report (2005)
- The Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Ryan Report) (2009)
- The Commission of Investigation "Report into the Catholic Diocese of Cloyne" (2010)

Learnings:

1.

All places of work that involve children should provide particularly for the **safety, health and welfare of children**.

The purpose of the guiding principles is to communicate this intent to all volunteers, staff, children and parents.

2.

Confusion about roles and responsibilities has been highlighted. Where clear responsibility was not placed on named personnel to report child protection concerns, child abuse continued unchecked and other children were placed at risk of abuse.

3.

Failure to report concerns to the appropriate authorities without delay has led to ongoing abuse of children.

Haphazard and sloppy recording of concerns and actions have also **inhibited recognition of abuse and safeguarding of children**.

4.

Poor recruitment, inadequate staff training and lack of supervision creates an environment where children are not safe from harm.

The inquiries highlighted the **need for child-centred work practice and clear codes of behaviour/ conduct for staff**.

5.

When complaints of abuse were made there was a **reluctance to receive and respond appropriately to these complaints**. Children, young people, and parents/guardians must understand how to make complaints and be confident that these complaints will be handled appropriately.

6.

It is not enough to adopt guidelines for the protection of children.

Failure to fully implement and comply with these guidelines results in a failure to protect children.

11.7 Appendix 6: Relevant Legislation

There is a wide array of legislation that has been enacted and is relevant to the safeguarding of children. Below is a list of key pieces of legislation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and it is important to check for updates when reviewing your policy. All legislation can be found at: www.irishstatutebook.ie

- Child Care Act 1991
- Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Children Act 2001
- Criminal Justice Act (reckless endangerment) 2006
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016
- Child and Family Agency Act 2013
- Protected Disclosures Act 2014
- Freedom of Information Act 2014
- Children First Act 2015
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Violence Act 2018
- Coco's Law (The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act) 2020



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