



Youth Work Ireland

*Be Part of It*

# **Child Protection Policy\***

## **August 2014**

**\*This document is currently under review, awaiting legislation & guidance.**

## Child Protection Policy - Contents

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# 1. Introduction

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**“We work with local communities all over Ireland to deliver quality supports and services with and for young people. We provide safe spaces where young people are listened to, make a difference and have fun.” Be part of it!**

Youth Work Ireland is a federation of 22 Local Member Youth Services who deliver programmes and services to young people across the island of Ireland. We work with over 100,000 young people, through 470 clubs and youth projects, supported by over 900 staff and 7,000 dedicated volunteers.

## **Outcomes of our work:**

Through our network of clubs, projects, drop in centres, youth information centres, youth cafés, music, arts, citizenship programmes and other outlets, we promote an open, integrated and accessible approach to working with young people. As a Federation of local youth services run by local people, we are uniquely placed to reach young people in their local communities around Ireland. We work to develop the potential of these young people and to strengthen communities in Ireland through quality youth services.

Young people are at the heart of our organisation and are supported with excellent standards in volunteering, leaders and programme services. Many young people do not have a safe place to go where they can have a sense of belonging, when they can have a positive relationship with adults and where people believe in them. We offer young people from all backgrounds a place to go, a listening ear and support if it's needed. The services are run by local people and the programmes are run based on the needs of the local community. Positive relationships between young people and adults ensure that young people thrive and are on the road to reaching their potential as well rounded adults.

Each of the 22 Member Youth Services of Youth work Ireland are committed to providing an *Integrated Youth Services Model* in their region. From the perspective of the young person put simply this model mean that regardless of the point of initial contact, access or entry, the whole range of services and supports which are provided by the Youth Services are available to that young person if and when required

Youth Work Ireland's 22 Member Youth Services are deeply integrated within local communities throughout Ireland and provide youth supports and services that are built on the strengths of young people as well as addressing the needs of local communities. The following is the list of Full and Associated Member of Youth work Ireland. This Child Protection Policy applies both to the National Office of Youth work Ireland and each of the 22 Member Youth Services.

No.	Youth Work Ireland Member Youth Services	Full	Associate
1	CARLOW REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
2	CDYS YOUTH WORK IRELAND - CO. CORK	✓	
3	CLARE YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
4	DONEGAL YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
5	FDYS YOUTH WORK IRELAND	✓	
6	KERRY DIOCESAN YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
7	KILDARE YOUTH SERVICES	✓	
8	LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
9	MEATH YOUTH FEDERATION	✓	
10	MIDLANDS REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
11	NORTH CONNAUGHT YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
12	OSSORY YOUTH	✓	
13	TIPPERARY REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
14	WATERFORD & STH TIP COM YOUTH SERVICE	✓	
15	YOUTH WORK IRELAND GALWAY	✓	
16	YOUTH WORK IRELAND LAOIS	✓	
17	YOUTH WORK IRELAND LOUTH	✓	
18	YOUTH WORK IRELAND MONAGHAN	✓	
19	YOUTH WORK IRELAND ROSCOMMON & NE.GALWAY	✓	
20	YOUTH WORD IRELAND CORK	✓	
21	CANALS COMMUNITY REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICES	✓	
22	YOUTH WORK IRELAND LONGFORD		✓

Each of the 22 Member Youth Services and National Office are independent, autonomous organisations having their own Boards and legal personality. With the exception of Limerick Youth Services which is legally constitute as a Trust all other Member Youth Services and National Office is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. Each have their own charity number.

In 1999, the Department of Health and Children published **Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children**. These guidelines are intended to assist people in identifying and reporting Child Abuse to ensure best practice in Child Protection in statutory and voluntary agencies. The policy will be further update upon the enactment of the Children First Bill 2014.

Youth Work Ireland’s Child Protection policy and procedures have been developed for the National Organisation including the National Office and current 22 Member Youth Services. All Member Youth Services and their clubs/groups/projects will have their own local policy that will be in line with the principles outlined in this Overarching Policy and will also be in accordance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and that should be based on this policy. As much of National Office work with young people is through its Member Youth Services there must be a compatibility of procedures. National Office staff must be particularly clear about events were National Office has primary responsibility for young people and is acting in Loco Parentis. National Office staff is supported and guided through their responsibilities and procedures, particularly regarding reporting and confidentiality and the necessity to have a copy of the policy statement prominently displayed. All staff and volunteers are required to complete a “Statement of commitment” to the policy once they have been informed of and

have familiarised themselves with its contents and procedures (**Appendix 1**). A user friendly copy of the key relevant sections of the policy will be distributed to all staff / volunteers, along with Child Protection information leaflet

Child Protection is about promoting the welfare of children who avail of our services. It is about creating a safe environment for both staff/volunteers and young people, where trust and willingness to listen to the young person is foremost.

The developing of the policy and procedures is an enabling process, drawing on our current good practice with children. Such a policy is an invaluable tool in helping our staff/volunteers involved in working with young people to safeguard both the young person and themselves.

It is a requirement for all staff / volunteers to read, sign and comply with the procedures outlined in this policy. The parents / guardians of young people will also be informed of the contents of the policy. A user friendly handbook on Child Protection, based on this policy will be presented and discussed with all young people and they will be made aware of the steps they can take should they have a Child Protection concern and the person they can contact for advice and support.

## 2. Overview of Youth Work Ireland

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### The Services of Youth Work Ireland

**Youth Work Ireland promotes and supports Local Youth Services delivered by local communities**

Youth Work Ireland is a federation of local youth services throughout the country who work in the interest of young people through the provision of a range of services and activities all sharing a common ethos and approach.

As a co-ordinating and development agency for youth services throughout the country, Youth Work Ireland has, since 1962 sought to give voice to the needs and aspirations of young people, to support and encourage trained volunteers and staff and ultimately, to improve the quality of life for young people in the context of community based youth services.

Ireland is rapidly changing and young people are faced with many new challenges and opportunities. We believe that youth work has much to offer them as they meet the future. Supporting their development as active and critical citizens is core to our task.

Youth Work Ireland is ready to enthusiastically embrace the challenges which present themselves in the hope of seeing the establishment of a national youth service in every conceivable location where young people gather throughout the island. For whatever part you have played or will play in that future your commitment and support in making this dream a living reality is and will be hugely appreciated.



## **Our Vision**

**Youth Work Ireland** has a clear and unambiguous view of the kind of society we want to contribute to developing.

Our vision states this clearly as:

*‘Young People create and define a proud new Ireland’*

We will achieve this by deploying the resources of the Federation, both nationally and at a regional level through the engagement of Boards, staff and countless volunteers in order to:

- Promote quality youth work
- Build our capacity
- Work to realize the rights of young people
- Influence decision making and policy

## **Our Beliefs**

- We have a positive view of young people, their dignity and worth
- All young people have rights and should be supported to realise these
- Young People have the potential to effect change

All Member Youth Services and National Office must have a Child Protection Policy and Procedures in place that are understood and applied by staff and volunteers. Many of our events are based on working together (e.g. programmes, consensus events), because of this there needs to be compatibility between our policies and practice and the understanding of these by workers and volunteers. It is important that briefing and information is made available to staff, volunteers and young people on such events. All staff and volunteers at joint events carry the duties, responsibilities and obligations of child protection.



### 3. Context of the Policy

There are a number key International and National pieces of legislation, documents and policies underpinning this Child Protection Policy.

#### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1992. The National Children's Strategy is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and as such, sets out the vision for children in Ireland over a ten-year period. We believe that all work with children and young people should, by its very nature, recognise, implement and promote the fundamental tenets of the Convention.

#### **The Child Care Act, 1991**

The 1991 Child Care Act 1992 defines a child as someone under 18 years of age who is not married. The UN Convention defines a child as someone under 18 years of age and the National Children's Strategy in Ireland, similarly defines a child as someone less than 18 years of age, who is not married.

#### **Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999**

The Children First Guidelines were issued by the Department of Health and Children in 1999 and outline procedures, which all organisations dealing with children and young people should put in place. They state that all such organisations should put in place a child protection policy tailored to their specific needs. This policy should outline the procedures and arrangements in place to protect children in line with "Children First". Equally, the policy will provide protection for staff in CRYS in their work with children.

#### **Our Duty to Care**

*Our Duty to Care* was published by the Department of Health and Children in October 2002. It offers a practical guide to staff and volunteers who work with children by outlining a number of fundamental principles of good practice.

#### **National Children's Strategy**

The overall vision of this strategy is; *'An Ireland where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential.'*

#### **Better Outcomes, Brighter Future - National Policy Framework for Children and Youth People 2014 - 2020**

*Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* the first whole of Government and cross departmental children and young people national policy framework. *It is for policy makes and services providers and covers policy in relation to all children in and young people in Ireland from the ages of 0 to 24 year. The strategy identifies five key outcomes for children and young people. As a result of the implementation of the strategy children and young people will be:*

- Active and Healthy
- Achieving in all areas of learning and development

- Safe and Protected from harm
- Have economic security and opportunity
- Be connected, respected and contributing

The new National Youth Strategy will be developed under these national outcomes and is due to be published in late 2014. This child protection policy is underpinned by both the National Children and Youth Policy Framework and the National Youth Strategy.

## 4. Youth Work Ireland's Child Protection Policy

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It is the policy of Youth Work Ireland to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from all forms of abuse. Youth Work Ireland is committed to safeguarding young people and to provide a safe space for children and young people to grow, develop, learn and have fun.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Through our Membership Charter to ensure that all Member Youth Services have a formal Child Protection Policy in place that is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Delivering training to all staff and volunteer engaged in National Office Activities that is appropriate to their role, work and contact with young people.
- Evidence of all Child Protection training will be provided and kept on file.
- The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions, activities and programmes involving children and young people.
- Adhering to the procedures set out for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Adopting Child Protection guidelines and reflecting these through our code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about Child Protection and good practice with children, parents / guardians, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information and working with relevant agencies as appropriate.
- Taking part in multi-disciplinary teams as appropriate.
- Manage the Garda Vetting process for all staff and volunteers on behalf of Member Youth Services and National Office Staff.
- Track and monitor the delivery of Child Protection Training by designated Child Protection trainers in Member Youth Services.
- Carry out an annual audit of child protection compliance across all services.

In conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) Child Protection Unit this Child Protect Policy is reviewed annually. The Designated Person in National Office, the Designated Persons in Member Youth Services, the staff teams and Boards review the Child Protection policy, procedures and practices on an annual basis and also in accordance with any changes in relevant legislation and national guidelines in relation to Child Protection and young people.

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, programme participants, visitors, facilitators, guests, student placements and contractors of Youth Work Ireland as a collective and in particular to the National Office and the Member Youth Services. Youth Work Ireland requires all other users of the facilities of National Office and the Member Youth Services to abide by the working practices contained within this policy.

When Youth Work Ireland National Office and / or its Member Youth Services are working in partnership with other organizations this policy is to be implemented. In the case of two Member Youth Services or the National Office and a Member Youth Services working on a particular Child Protection issues it would need to be ascertained and agreed by both Designated Persons as to who was best placed to work with the young person and family.

## 5. Principles for Best Practice in Child Protection

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**Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children**, National Guidelines are complemented by the publication of **Our Duty to Care: the Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People** (Department of Health and Children, 2002). The 2002 publication is a practical guide for staff and volunteers who work with children, outlining fundamental principles of good practice.

Youth Work Ireland adopts the following principles outlined in **Our Duty to Care**, ensuring the creation of an environment in which young people are listened to, given a sense of belonging and kept safe. Creating an environment where parents are supported and encouraged and staff and volunteers who work with young people are supported and protected.

The following are the key principles for best practice in Child Protection:

- Acknowledge the rights of children to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.
- Recognise that the welfare of children must always come first, regardless of all other considerations.
- Develop a Child Protection policy that raises awareness about the possibility of Child Abuse occurring and outlines the steps to be taken if abuse is suspected.
- Adopt the safest possible practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take risks and leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- Adopt and consistently apply clearly defined methods of recruiting staff and volunteers.
- Remember that early intervention with children who are vulnerable or at risk may prevent serious harm from happening to them at a later stage.
- Remember that a child's age, gender and background affects the way they experience and understand what is happening to them.
- Provide Child Protection training/briefings for young people, staff and volunteers. This should clarify the responsibilities of both organisations and individuals and clearly show the procedures to be followed if Child Abuse is suspected.
- Develop a policy of openness with parents/guardians that involve consulting them about everything that concerns their children and encouraging them to get involved with the organisation whenever possible.
- Co-operate with other childcare and protection agencies and professionals by sharing information when necessary and working together towards the best possible outcome for the children concerned.
- Make links with other relevant organisations in order to promote Child Protection and welfare policies and procedures.

It is the ethos of Youth Work Ireland that by valuing both young people and staff/volunteers and creating a safe working and learning environment, will make for a more rewarding and welcoming atmosphere.

## 6 The Rights of the Child

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For the purpose of this policy “a child” means a person under the age of 18 years, who is or has not been married.

Ireland ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** in 1992. The Convention is in essence a “bill of rights” for all children. It contains rights relating to every aspect of children’s lives including the right to survival, development, protection and participation.

The underlying principles of the Convention may be summarised as follows:

- I. **Non-Discrimination (Art. 2):**  
All rights apply to all children without exception. The state is obliged to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take action to promote their rights.
- II. **Best Interests of the Child (Art. 3):**  
All actions concerning the child shall take account of his or her best interests. The state shall provide the child with adequate care when parents or others charged with that responsibility fail to do so.
- III. **Survival and Development (Art. 6):**  
Every child has the inherent right to life and the state has an obligation to ensure the child’s survival and development.
- IV. **The Child’s Opinion (Art. 12):**  
The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

A number of articles of the Convention are of particular relevance to Child Protection:

- I. **Article 19** states that parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child.
- II. **Articles 34 and 35** refer respectively to the protection of children from sexual exploitation and from sale, trafficking and abduction.

## **7. Key Legislative Provisions**

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The following are the key legislative provisions governing the rights of children and young people and their protection and the protection of those reporting Child Abuse concerns:

### **Child Care Act, 1991**

The purpose of the act is to “up-date the law in relation to the care of children who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused or who are at risk”. The main provisions of the act are:

1. The placing of a statutory duty on the TUSLA to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection up to the age of 18 (Sec. 3.1)
2. The strengthening of the powers of the TUSLA to provide childcare and family support services.
3. The improvement of the procedures to facilitate immediate intervention by TUSLA and An Garda Síochána where children are in danger.
4. The revision of provisions to enable the courts to place children, who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused or who are at risk, in the care of or under the supervision of H.S.E.
5. The introduction of arrangements for the supervision and inspection of pre-school services.
6. The revision of provisions in relation to the registration and inspection of residential centres for children.

### **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**

This act came into operation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1999. The main provisions of the act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports Child Abuse “**reasonably and in good faith**” to designated officers of TUSLA or any member of An Garda Síochána.
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report Child Abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to, and including, dismissal.
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of Child Abuse where a person makes a report of Child Abuse to the appropriate authorities “**knowing that statement to be false**”. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

### **Data Protection Act, 1988**

The act only applies to the automatic processing of personal data. It gives a right to every individual, irrespective of nationality or residence, to establish the

existence of personal data, to have access to any such data relating to him/her and to have inaccurate data rectified or erased. It requires data controllers to make sure that the data they keep are collected fairly, are accurate and up-to-date, are kept for lawful purposes, and are not used or disclosed in any manner incompatible with those purposes. It also requires both data controllers and data processors to protect the data they keep, and imposes on them a special duty of care in relation to the individuals about whom they keep such data.

There are only three exclusions under the act:

1. Data relating to state security
2. Information that is required by law to be made available to the public
3. Personal data kept only for personal or recreational purposes

**Additional legislative provisions include the following:**

- Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2007
- Freedom of Information Act, 1997
- Domestic Violence Act, 1996
- Non-Fatal Offences Against The Person Act, 1997
- Data Protection Act

**Additional Related Policies having a bearing on Child Protection**

- Health and Safety Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Statement
- Alcohol Policy
- Equality Policy

**Additional Other supporting documents**

Staff Handbook

Volunteer Development Resource Manual

Dealing with Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco in Youth Work Settings Guidelines for Youth Workers



## 8. The Role of the Designated Person

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A Child Protection Designated Person has been appointed in Youth Work Ireland for National Office and all its activities and in addition each Member Youth Services has appointed their own Designated Person. The Designated Person acts as a resource to any young person, staff member and volunteer who have Child Protection concerns. All dealings of a Child Protection nature go through the Designated Person who in turn may make a referral to the TUSLA or Gardaí (**Appendix 2** Internal Referral Procedure Chart). National Office and each Member Youth Service must also appoint a Deputy who will cover for the Designated Person during any absences.

### Youth Work Ireland Designated Persons:

For Youth Work Ireland National Office:

**Paul Gralton**

**Contact Details:**

Mobile: 087 2949648

Land Line: 01 8584500

Email: [pgralton@youthworkireland.ie](mailto:pgralton@youthworkireland.ie)

Address: Youth Work Ireland, 20 Lower Dominic Street, Dublin 1

**Deputy: Patrick Bukre**

**Contact Details:**

Mobile: 086 2225774

Land Line: 01 8584500

Email: [patrickburke@youthworkireland.ie](mailto:patrickburke@youthworkireland.ie)

Address: Youth Work Ireland, 20 Lower Dominic Street, Dublin

For Member Youth Services - see appendix --- attached - not all audits are completed  
- list of designated persons to be followed up

### 1. CARLOW REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

Name: Adam Byrne

**Contact Details:**

Mobile: 085 2780307

Land Line: 059 9130476

Email: [adam@carlowys.ie](mailto:adam@carlowys.ie)

Address: Carlow Regional Youth Service, Montgomery House, Athy Rd, Carlow.

**Deputy: Aoife Walsh**

**Contact Details:**

Mobile: 0867713793

Land Line: 059 9130476

Email: [aoife@carlowys.ie](mailto:aoife@carlowys.ie)

## 2 CDYS YOUTH WORK IRELAND - CO. CORK

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 3 CLARE YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 4 DONEGAL YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 5 FDYS YOUTH WORK IRELAND

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 6 KERRY DIOCESAN YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 7 KILDARE YOUTH SERVICES

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 8 LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 9 MEATH YOUTH FEDERATION

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 10 MIDLANDS REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line

Email:

## 11 NORTH CONNAUGHT YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 12 OSSORY YOUTH

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## 13 TIPPERARY REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:

Land Line  
Email:

#### **14 WATERFORD & STH TIP COM YOUTH SERVICE**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

#### **15 YOUTH WORK IRELAND GALWAY**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

#### **16 YOUTH WORK IRELAND LAOIS**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**

Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## **17 YOUTH WORK IRELAND LOUTH**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## **18 YOUTH WORK IRELAND MONAGHAN**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

## **19 YOUTH WORK IRELAND ROSCOMMON & NE.GALWAY**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**

**Contact Details:**

Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

**20 YOUTH WORD IRELAND CORK**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

**21 CANALS COMMUNITY REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
Mobile:  
Land Line  
Email:

**22 YOUTH WORK IRELAND LONGFORD**

Name:  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:



**Deputy:**  
**Contact Details:**  
**Mobile:**  
**Land Line**  
**Email:**

In the absence of the Designated Persons, staff, volunteers and young people can contact:

**National Office:**

Patrick Burke (CEO Youth Work Ireland) on 086 2225774 for advice and support on Child Protection / welfare concerns and / or disclosures.

**Member Youth Services:** I think all this information should be contained in the one sheet as most of the information is already there - just add another line if the RD is not one of the designated people - if not see attached sheet of RDs

**1. CARLOW REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE**

**Name:** (Regional Director)  
**Contact Details:**  
**Mobile:**  
**Land Line:**  
**Email:**  
**Address:**

**2 CDYS YOUTH WORK IRELAND - CO. CORK**

**Name:** (Regional Director)  
**Contact Details:**  
**Mobile:**  
**Land Line:**  
**Email:**  
**Address:**

**3 CLARE YOUTH SERVICE**

**Name:** (Regional Director)  
**Contact Details:**  
**Mobile:**  
**Land Line:**  
**Email:**  
**Address:**

**4 DONEGAL YOUTH SERVICE**

**Name:** (Regional Director)  
**Contact Details:**

Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **5 FDYS YOUTH WORK IRELAND**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **6 KERRY DIOCESAN YOUTH SERVICE**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **7 KILDARE YOUTH SERVICES**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **8 LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **9 MEATH YOUTH FEDERATION**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **10 MIDLANDS REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **11 NORTH CONNAUGHT YOUTH SERVICE**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **12 OSSORY YOUTH**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **13 TIPPERARY REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **14 WATERFORD & STH TIP COM YOUTH SERVICE**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **15 YOUTH WORK IRELAND GALWAY**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:

Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **16 YOUTH WORK IRELAND LAOIS**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **17 YOUTH WORK IRELAND LOUTH**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **18 YOUTH WORK IRELAND MONAGHAN**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **19 YOUTH WORK IRELAND ROSCOMMON & NE.GALWAY**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **20 YOUTH WORD IRELAND CORK**

Name: (Regional Director)  
Contact Details:  
Mobile:  
Land Line:  
Email:  
Address:

## **21 CANALS COMMUNITY REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

Name: (Regional Director)

Contact Details:

Mobile:

Land Line:

Email:

Address:

## 22 YOUTH WORK IRELAND LONGFORD

Name: (Regional Director)

Contact Details:

Mobile:

Land Line:

Email:

Address:

The Designated Person and the Deputy Designated person should endeavour to develop strong and trusting working relationships with members of the Local Social Worker Department in order to have a good resource, support, information and advice structure in place.

### **The role of the Designated Person is as follows:**

- To report suspicions and allegations of Child Abuse to the TUSLA or the Gardaí.
- To provide information and advice on Child Protection within the organisation.
- To build up networks of support for the victim and for the staff/volunteer making a referral.
- To ensure that the Child Protection policy and procedures are adhered to, and to inform the TUSLA of relevant concerns about individual children.
- To give advice on individual cases, where appropriate.
- To advise on good practice and guidelines on Child Protection.
- To liaise with TUSLA, Gardaí and other agencies as appropriate.
- To keep the CEO of the Youth Work Ireland informed about any referrals.
- To maintain proper records on all referred cases in a secure and confidential manner.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the Designated Person and also that they each receive appropriate Child Protection awareness training, briefing and or information as appropriate.
- To ensure that all young people are familiar with the child protection policy by informing, briefing and providing accessible written information.
- To ensure that other persons interacting with young people at Youth Work Ireland events activities and programmes are informed of, are aware of and understand Youth Work Ireland's Child Protection Policy (Contractors, Trainers, and Other Third Parties).
- To keep informed about current developments regarding the provision, practice, support services, legal obligations etc.

- To ensure that the issue of Child Protection is considered and the policy implemented as an integral part of the delivery of all National events, programmes and processed organised by the National Office of Youth Work Ireland.

The Designated Person is accessible to everyone in the organisation and is supported by on-going training and supervision. When she/he receives a report about suspected or actual abuse, she/he will consider whether there are reasonable grounds for reporting it to the **TUSLA**.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern and should be reported:

- A disclosure from the child that he/she was abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused.
- Evidence, such as injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely, to be caused another way.
- An injury or behaviour, which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, and other indicators of abuse or dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective signs of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion, or reasonable grounds for concern. However, these suspicions should be reported to the Designated Person who will record them internally as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report. A Child Protection tracking sheet may also be started at this point by the staff person/volunteer, in conjunction with the Designated Person. In such a case further reports and observation may lead to reasonable ground and referral to the TUSLA.

## 9. Confidentiality

This section outlines and provides guidance on Youth Work Ireland's code on confidentiality. Youth work involves the development of trusting relationships where it may be common for children and young people to divulge personal information. Therefore, all staff and volunteers need to be aware that a young person or a colleague may disclose that they are being abused or know of someone who is being abused.

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful. All information provided to Youth Work Ireland by a child or young person, volunteer or staff member must be treated in a confidential manner. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to handle all sensitive information in line with Youth Work Ireland's code on confidentiality.

### Code of Confidentiality

1. All information regarding a Child Protection concern or suspected case of Child Abuse must be only shared on a 'need to know basis' and always in the best interests of the child's general welfare and safety. The subject should never be discussed with other persons in the organisation, including staff, volunteers or young people if they are not directly involved.
2. In the case of a Child Protection concern, no member of staff or volunteer should promise to tell a person they can keep a secret to any person disclosing the information. The person receiving the information should also never state that they would keep a secret if the organisation did not have a policy on this. This could give the person who made the disclosure the impression that the information is not that serious or infer a range of mixed messages. It must be made clear to the person(s) making the disclosure that secrets cannot be kept but that the information will only be shared with the appropriate person who will handle the information sensitively.
3. Sharing information with an appropriate / designated person for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality. Codes of confidentiality do not intend to prevent the exchange of information between individuals who have a responsibility to protect children.
4. Personal information, which is gathered for a specific purpose, should never be used for any other purpose without consulting the person who provided that information.
5. All staff and volunteers working with children must have some training on understanding of the importance of confidentiality and the limitations of confidentiality in relation to Child Protection issues.

## 10. Dealing with Disclosures / Reporting Procedures

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Should a young person disclose abuse to you the following important points should be taken into consideration:

- Take what the young person says **seriously**.
- Be as calm and as natural as possible. Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the young person.
- **Reassure the young person that it was right to tell somebody** what happened and that they have done nothing wrong.
- Remember that the young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- **Listen to what the young person has to say.** Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to. Do not pressure the young person. Allow him/her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Be careful when asking questions. **Your job is not to investigate** but to support the young person. Avoid leading questions such as whether a specific person carried out the abuse, or whether specific acts mentioned by the young person occurred. Such questions may complicate an official investigation.
- **Do not express any opinion** about the alleged abuser to the young person.
- It may be necessary to reassure the young person that your feelings towards him/her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what he / she has disclosed.
- **Do not promise to keep secrets.** At the earliest opportunity tell the young person that you acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you. Tell him / her that there are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further on-going hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the young person, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the young person's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that he/she will return to you at another time.



- At the earliest possible opportunity **record in writing** what the young person has said, including as far as possible, the exact words uttered by him / her. Record facts only, no opinions or hearsay.
- **Pass on all information to the Designated Person** and not to any other third party, as disclosures are on a need to know basis only.
- The Designated Person will carry out the necessary steps in making a referral to the Health Service Executive.

### **Ongoing Support**

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that the Youth Work Ireland staff and volunteers continue in a supportive relationship with the child. Once the Designated Person makes the referral to the H.S.E, our duty to care on the disclosure is passed on. Disclosure is a huge step for many children and support should be continued through:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child.
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening to the child.
- Continuing to include the child in the usual activities.

Any further disclosures should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to accordingly.

### **Dealing With a Suspicion of Child Abuse**

In situations where a suspicion / concern may be deemed vague i.e. where there is no specific allegation but there is some concern based on the emotional behaviour and/or physical presentation or behaviour of the child, then staff/volunteers should consult the Designated Person for advice. The Designated Person will assess whether or not a report is warranted and will seek the advice of TUSLA if required. Details of the consultation will be recorded and filed. A formal report to TUSLA may follow as advised.

## 11. Allegations against a Staff Member or Volunteer

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If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer in National Office or a Member Youth Services that issue will be dealt with in accordance with this Child Protect policy. This section of the policy should be read in conjunction with the Disciplinary Section of the Youth Work Ireland Staff Handbook and Appendix 3 of this policy.

### National Office:

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer within the National Office of the Youth Work Ireland then two separate procedures will be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child
- The procedure for dealing with the staff member or volunteer

These procedures, according to **Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children** should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee or volunteer. In this situation, Youth Work Ireland must have due regard for the rights and interest of the child on one hand, and those of the person against whom the allegation is made on the other hand.

The CEO of Youth Work Ireland will deal with the staff member / volunteer in question, while the Designated Person will have the responsibility of dealing with the reporting issue and supporting the child. Staff / volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations, therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff as well as the child, including counselling where necessary. However, the primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the staff member/volunteer fairly.

When the CEO of the Youth Work Ireland becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a staff member / volunteer, if appropriate, she will inform that person of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him / her.
- The nature of the allegation.

If an allegation is made against a staff member / volunteer TUSLA will be notified. The staff member / volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Regional Director will note the response. Normal procedures as outlined in the Staff Handbook for Disciplinary procedures will then be followed.

It is important to note that “**The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**” applies equally to organisations provided they report the matter “**reasonably and in good faith**”.

Youth Work Ireland accepts the possibility that a number of factors may have a bearing on the organisation and will need to be considered:

- Possible reactions of other members of staff / volunteers including anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, guilt, shock, anxiety and confusion.
- The effects on the alleged abuser of the internal disciplinary proceedings, the Child Protection investigation and the criminal investigation.
- The reactions of other staff / volunteers and the other children towards the young person who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated.
- The reaction of parents / carers other organisations, Member Youth Services and other family members of the young person.

Through a series of basic Child Protection awareness training programmes, all persons involved in Youth Work Ireland will be given the opportunity to discuss such issues in an open and non-threatening environment.

**NOTE:** Should an allegation be made against the CEO of Youth Work Ireland, the Chairperson of the Board will step in to deal with the situation. ( Note Appendix 4)

#### **Procedures for Dealing with Employees and Employers Duty of Care to Children or Child Abuse.**

- The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk and as such any necessary protective measures will be taken e.g. suspension of the staff member / volunteer. These measures will be **proportionate** to the level of risk and will not unreasonably penalise the worker financially, or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children.
- It may be necessary for the CEO to seek legal advice for any action following an allegation against a staff member / volunteer. A meeting may need to be arranged with the TUSLA / Gardaí to discuss the allegation.
- The CEO will inform the person accused on the outcome of the above consultation.

Pending the outcome of the investigation by the TUSLA and/or Gardaí the staff member / volunteer may:

- Be re-assigned to duties that do not involve contact or access to children / young people, depending on the nature of the allegation.
- Be suspended with pay.

The staff member / volunteer will be offered counselling, should the need arise.

#### **Member Youth Services:**

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer within a Member Youth Services of the Youth Work Ireland then two separate procedures will be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child
- The procedure for dealing with the staff member or volunteer

These procedures, according to **Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children** should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee or volunteer. In this situation, the Member Youth Services must have due regard for the rights and interest of the child on one hand, and those of the person against whom the allegation is made on the other hand.

The Regional Directors of the Member Youth Service will deal with the staff member / volunteer in question, while the Designated Person will have the responsibility of dealing with the reporting issue and supporting the child. Staff / volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations, therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff as well as the child, including counselling where necessary. However, the primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the staff member/volunteer fairly.

When the Regional Director of the Member Youth Services becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a staff member / volunteer, if appropriate, she will inform that person of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him / her.
- The nature of the allegation.

If an allegation is made against a staff member / volunteer TUSLA will be notified. The staff member / volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Regional Director will note the response. Normal procedures as outlined in the Staff Handbook for Disciplinary procedures will then be followed.

It is important to note that “**The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**” applies equally to organisations provided they report the matter “**reasonably and in good faith**”.

Youth Work Ireland’s Member Youth Services accept the possibility that a number of factors may have a bearing on the organisation and will need to be considered:

- Possible reactions of other members of staff / volunteers including anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, guilt, shock, anxiety and confusion.
- The effects on the alleged abuser of the internal disciplinary proceedings, the Child Protection investigation and the criminal investigation.
- The reactions of other staff / volunteers and the other children towards the young person who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated.
- The reaction of parents / carers and other family members of the young person.

Through a series of basic Child Protection awareness training programmes, all persons involved in the Youth Work Ireland will be given the opportunity to discuss such issues in an open and non-threatening environment.

**NOTE:** Should an allegation be made against the Regional Director of a Member Youth Service of Youth Work Ireland, the Chairperson of the Board will step in to deal with the situation.

**Procedures for Dealing with Employees and Employers Duty of Care to Children or Child Abuse.**

- The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk and as such any necessary protective measures will be taken e.g. suspension of the staff member / volunteer. These measures will be **proportionate** to the level of risk and will not unreasonably penalise the worker financially, or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children.
- It may be necessary for the Regional Director to seek legal advice for any action following an allegation against a staff member / volunteer. A meeting may need to be arranged with the TUSLA/ Gardaí to discuss the allegation.
- The Regional Director will inform the person accused on the outcome of the above consultation.

Pending the outcome of the investigation by the TUSLA and/or Gardaí the staff member / volunteer may:

- Be re-assigned to duties that do not involve contact or access to children / young people, depending on the nature of the allegation.
- Be suspended with pay.

The staff member / volunteer will be offered counselling, should the need arise.

## 12. Exchange of Information

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All staff and volunteers should be aware that ensuring Child Protection is only possible in the organisation if all staff and volunteers share relevant information. Also to ensure Child Protection, the organisation must work in partnership with TUSLA and the Gardaí.

Any person who receives information from colleagues about possible or actual Child Abuse must treat it as having been given in confidence and follow the organisation's reporting procedures.

It is also necessary that any records of incidents, disclosures, or concerns of a Child Protection nature are only accessible to those who should have access to the records because of a need to know.

Reports that are made to the Designated Person can still be followed up on after being shared with the statutory agencies. However, it should be noted that not giving the name of the person making the report can make it more difficult to assess a situation.

## 13. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

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Youth Work Ireland recruitment and selection procedures are contained in the document *Youth Work Ireland Recruitment Pack (recruitment and induction policy and procedures)*. The relevant sections of this document should be read in conducting with this Child Protection Policy. Youth Work Ireland adopts the safe recruitment and selection practices outlined in both **Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children** and **Our Duty to Care**, endeavouring to protect its members from harm. The procedures are designed to be clear, unambiguous and equitable and in the best interest of young people and adults alike.

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures and involves:

- Always Advertising vacant posts (Recruitment Pack page 7)
- Always applying thorough selection procedures (Recruitment Pack page 8)
- Judging the suitability of applicants in relation to a broad range of matters
- Taking all reasonable steps to eliminate people who are not suitable for working with children
- Providing training

### Implementation of Procedures

a. **Role Clarification**

Identify the role of the new employee or volunteer and the skills that will be required for them to carry out their duties.

b. **Application Form**

All applicants wishing to apply for staff positions should apply on the standard Youth Work Ireland application form. Volunteers complete the volunteer application form. A clear job/role description along with a profile of the Youth Work Ireland will be provided at this stage.

c. **Declaration of Suitability**

All applicants will be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with young people. The Declaration of Suitability is included in both the Staff and Volunteer application forms. Garda Vetting is sought for all staff and volunteers.

d. **Verification of identity and of qualifications**

Youth Work Ireland will take all necessary steps to the verify identity of candidates and to authenticate their qualifications. All applicants will be asked to present some identification e.g. passport, driving licence, ID card, which gives his/her full name, address, signature and photo, to confirm their identity.

e. **Selection Process**

Shortlisting of candidates will be based on the information supplied by the candidates using the relevant criteria drawn up by those shortlisting (ref

Recruitment Pack page 19) All candidates (those shortlisted and those who are not shortlisted) will be informed in writing)

f. **Interview**

Applicants will be interviewed by at least two representatives of the Youth Work Ireland. Their previous experience, with particular reference to their working and contact with children will be focused on. Reference to the Child Protection policy and procedures will be emphasised. Youth Work Ireland reserves the right to go to second interview.

g. **References**

The applicant will be obliged to supply the name of two referees (non-relatives) who are willing to supply Youth Work Ireland with references on their behalf. All references will be received in writing and confirmed by telephone and all details will be recorded. Any additional information will be attached to the application form.

h. **Induction**

It is the policy of Youth Work Ireland and its Member Youth Survives that all newly recruited staff and volunteers undergo an induction programme. This programme will typically include an introduction to the organisation, to fellow staff members and their respective roles, all internal policies and procedures of the organisation with a particular emphasis on the Child Protection Policy and the Health and Safety policy, Child Protection training, etc.

i. **Probationary Period**

Confirmation of all appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a period of probation, which will be specified in the contract. During the probationary period, Youth Work Ireland will ensure that each employee is fully assisted in understanding and becoming familiar with the demands of their post and that there is full discussion with the employee about their progress and any concerns or issues which may have arisen. During the probationary period, the employee will be advised on their progress in accordance with the individual contract of employment.

The period of probation may be extended for a special period if the organisation is not fully satisfied that the employee is suitable for the post. The employee will be informed through supervision and in writing about the reason(s) for this decision. (See Staff Hand Book - Section of Probationary Period)

Youth Work Ireland will apply the above procedures consistently with paid and unpaid staff, part-time and full-time workers.



## 14. Support and Supervision

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Youth work Ireland's staff support and supervision policy is outlined in *Job Planning, Supervision and Performance Review System 2012*. This section of the Child Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with this document.

For the purposes of this Child Protection Policy "staff" means all full time or part time permanent or temporary staff, and those on Government Funded schemes such as Jobs Bridge, Community Employment etc.

This policy also covers all volunteers which have been recruited in accordance with the Youth Work Ireland Volunteer Policy.

Student Placements and Internships (this issue must be deliberated on and agreed by the Child Protection Sub Group)

Volunteering and working with children is both worthwhile and fulfilling, but also challenging. Once recruited, all staff and volunteers of the Youth Work Ireland will be well informed, trained, supervised and supported, so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm, or can be misunderstood.

The following processes will apply:

### Induction

All applicants will go through an initial induction period, which will enable them to get to know the organisation, the staff/volunteers, their role and responsibilities. Contracts of employment, where applicable, will be discussed and signed. The induction period will also cover expectations, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances and allegations and the Child Protection policy and procedures.

### Supervision and Support

Staff and volunteers and Student Placements participate in support and supervision sessions with their youth worker /line manager on a monthly basis. Interim sessions can be arranged should the need arise and there is access to email/telephone support as needed. Team/area support meetings are also held on a monthly basis throughout the organisation. The support and supervision sessions ensure that Youth Work Ireland personnel are supported in their work and given the appropriate guidance and assistance to develop professionally within best practice guidelines.

Sessions include regular reviews of performance/activity with personnel in order to:

- Ensure that the requirements of the role are fulfilled
- Give / receive feedback on person / work performance
- Identify any additional training and development needs
- Plan objectives for the weeks / months / years ahead

Support and supervision provides personnel with the opportunity to discuss their work in a structured and supportive environment. It is a process for encouraging and enabling personal development through dialogue. Support and supervision also involves monitoring and directing work undertaken to ensure accountability to the organisation.

At least one hour will be set aside for each supervisory session. After the first session, progress achieved against the objectives agreed at the last meeting is evaluated and key objectives set for the period to come (**see Support and Supervision Document**).

As with all Youth Work Ireland internal policies, Child Protecting, training, information and policies will be regularly updated and communicated to all parties involved in the organisations once approved by the Board.

## 15. Training Policy

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It is the responsibility all personnel, together with the management of Youth Work Ireland to identify both individual and common training needs of staff and volunteers. The Service strives to meet the training needs of all staff/volunteers, where possible. Staff and volunteers are also encouraged to identify any gaps in training and to discuss them with the appropriate manager.

The Child Protection training standard of Youth Work Ireland is the NYCI Child Protection Awareness Programme. Youth Work Ireland has committed to having all personnel trained and kept up to date at this level. Further training is available for Designated Persons and for experienced trainers wishing to offer the CPAP course. Training also consists of staff meetings and briefings and cascade of information.

The National Office of Youth Work Ireland has the responsibility of co-ordinating, registering and recording the Child Protection Training for the whole Organisation. The minimum standard required is the TUSLA approved NYCI Child Protection training. This level must be undertaken and completed by all staff and volunteers. Member Youth Services have a duty to ensure that training takes place (Membership Charter of Youth Work Ireland) and that that training is registered appropriately with National Office.

## 16. Code of Behaviour for Staff and Volunteers

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The child-centred ethos of the Youth Work Ireland creates an environment in which children are valued, encouraged and listened to. We respect the rights of young people as individuals in society. Through training and education we ensure that young people know their rights and responsibilities.

The following code of behaviour is established to provide a clear understanding of the standards of behaviour of all staff / volunteers / students who work with Youth Work Ireland for the purpose of the safe care of children and young people. It will help foster an environment where young people feel secure and are treated with dignity and respect.

- Staff/volunteers are not permitted to give lifts in their cars to individual young people.
- Staff/volunteers must be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one young person. We need to be clear about the purpose and nature of the relationship with any young person e.g. is the relationship constructive in building up the independence and autonomy of the person or is it being used to satisfy our own agenda.
- Staff/volunteers should ensure, in so far as possible, that buildings or facilities, which they use, for activities with young people are safe and secure for the people in it. All occupied parts of the building should be monitored and parts not in use should be isolated or secured.
- For experienced workers, the member/worker ratio should be no more than 10:1. For new workers, the ratio should be less i.e. no more than 5:1.
- When dealing with young people with challenging behaviour, it is recommended, where possible, that more than one worker is present.
- When dealing with group members of mixed sexes it is important that workers have sufficient leaders of both sexes to properly manage all activities and areas of any premises in use.
- Staff members and volunteers should always be respectful of the privacy of young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets. When present in such areas workers are advised not to spend time alone with a young person.
- ***Dormitory and Changing Room Supervision***
  - Voluntary adult leaders and staff should be particularly careful in dormitory and changing room supervision of young people. They should always be respectful of the privacy and dignity of young people in such situations.

- Supervision of dormitories and changing rooms should be carried out by voluntary adult leaders, mentors and staff of the appropriate gender.
  - Voluntary adult leaders and staff should avoid situations where they are alone with young people in dormitories and changing rooms. Wherever practicable, there should be two or more voluntary adult leaders or staff present in dormitories and changing rooms. If a voluntary adult leader or staff person must be alone in a dormitory or a changing room with a young person, they must be of the same gender, and another adult should be informed of the situation.
  - Voluntary adult leaders and staff should not sleep in rooms/dormitories with young people.
  - The voluntary adult leader, mentor or staff person's room/cubicle should be off limits for young people.
  - Voluntary adult leaders, mentors and staff should exercise discretion and respect in relation to entering young people's cubicles or sleeping areas.
  - In changing rooms and washrooms, ensure that supervision is adequate but be mindful of the privacy of the young person.
- Staff members and volunteers should be sensitive to the risks in participating in some contact sports with young people and ensure that the young people are treated with dignity and respect.

- **Physical contact must be appropriate and in the interest of the young person**

As part of a normal healthy relationship between a voluntary adult leader/mentor or a staff person and a young person, socially acceptable physical contact will occur from time to time. This will include a handshake, a pat on the back, an affirmation, a comforting arm on the shoulder in times of distress, etc. These contacts should be made with integrity and respect for the young person, and in response to the needs of the young person. Inappropriate physical contact with the young people must be avoided at all times. Any discomfort or resistance on the part of the young person should be respected.

The most informal physical gestures e.g. putting a hand on a shoulder or arm, could be misconstrued by a young person or an observer, especially if they are continually repeated with the same young person.

There are particular conditions within which appropriate physical contact should properly take place. They include, when in a group situation:

- In open view
- With at least one other adult present
- With other young people present
- When the young person is clearly informed of the process to be followed and freely gives their permission e.g. administering first aid

Voluntary adult leaders/mentors and paid staff should use their discretion and good judgement with regard to necessary physical contact in some

activities including swimming, coaching, sports, games etc. Particular care should be taken in the following situations:

- One to One meetings
- Comforting a distressed young person
- Administering First Aid
- Intervening in a physical fight between young people

Physical force should not be used, except in circumstances where such force is the only means of protecting a child, young person or adult from injury.

- Young people should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to a staff member/volunteer of their choice.
- Staff and volunteers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should jokes of a sexual nature be told to or in the presence of a young person.
- Under no circumstances give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs in the company of children or young people.
- Use only age appropriate language media products and activities in working with children and young people.
- Do not take pictures of children or young people unless you have prior parental consent to do so.
- All staff /volunteers are required to maintain a positive attitude towards young people that respects the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
- If taking a group of young people away on a day trip, or sporting activity, you must ensure you have proper transport, adequate insurance cover, enough supervision and written parental consent. Facts must also be obtained of any specific medical conditions a young person suffer from and plans in place to deal with such, should the need arise. (See guidelines for Residential Trips)
- Never do anything of a personal nature for children and young people which they can do for themselves.
- Personal contact outside of youth work business should not be made with children and young people.
- ***Internet and social media***
  - Voluntary adult leaders and staff should not be linked to young people through personal social network sites such as the leader's own Facebook page.

- Voluntary adult leaders and staff should encourage young people to be respectful of other people in their comments and actions online.
- Voluntary adult leaders and staff should ensure that young people in their care are supervised during their use of Internet access.
- **One to one mentoring/individual work practices will be conducted in an open manner following the correct procedures**
  - There can be great value to a young person from a relationship with a supportive adult, and this can be facilitated through one to one individual work and other means where there is training support and supervision to support this developmental relationship.
- **Individual Work:**  
Individual work is defined as planned one to one work between a staff member or volunteer and an identified young person for a specific purpose over a specific period of time to achieve agreed outcomes.

Individual work should be carried out with a young person when:

- The benefit/appropriateness to the young person is greater than that of having them participate in a group programme.
- A young person, parent or appropriate professional requests a one to one programme for a young person to address a specific issue, i.e. separation, personal development, crisis situation arises, etc and meets the referral criteria for Youth Work Ireland member organisation.
- It is identified that a young person needs additional support about a topic/ issue.
- A young person will not attend a group programme but will engage on a one to one level.
- It is the best way to get to know a young person.
- It is the best way to enable the young person to develop skills and confidence to participate in a group setting.

All staff and volunteers are required to follow the above code of behaviour, thus providing a safe, comfortable and positive environment for staff / volunteers and young people.

## **17. The Safe Management of Activities**

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In addition to the Code of behaviour all staff / volunteers / Students are required to follow the guidelines below when conducting any activity with young people:

- Each child / young person must be registered on the Member Youth Service' standard registration form
- Parental consent forms and contact details for parents / guardians for each child / young person taking part in any activity.
- Ensure that all primary carers and young people are aware of our Child Protection policy and procedures
- Ensure all staff / volunteers and young people are aware of emergency procedures for fire and other accidents
- All staff / volunteers must follow the procedures for dealing with challenging behaviour.
- All activities carried out must be done so by qualified and experienced personnel.
- Any accidents must be recorded in either the Member Youth Services' Accident Report Form or the Youth Work Ireland Accident Report Form and the parents / guardians must be informed.
- Activities and/or outings undertaken must be covered by suitable insurance.
- Children and young people must not be left unattended during activities and sufficient supervision must be ensured at all times.
- A safety check will be carried out on all facilities and equipment utilised.
- Attendance records must be kept of all activities, outings etc. stating details of all participants, leaders, programmes etc.

### **Dealing with Challenging Behaviour**

Challenging behaviour can be defined as “behaviour which threatens staff / volunteers, other people or the child / young person themselves, in a verbal and / or physical manner. When confronted with such behaviour staff / volunteers must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Challenge the behaviour of the child / young person and not the person themselves.
- Try to remain as calm as possible and avoid becoming emotionally charged in dealing with the situation.
- Behaviour management must always emphasise positive approaches and prohibit any harsh or degrading actions.
- Consideration needs to be given to the developmental as well as the chronological age of the child / young person.
- Be aware of signals that may trigger further outbursts in the child / young person, such as change of tone of voice, body language etc.



- If the challenging behaviour presents itself with others around, either remove yourself and the child / young person away from others so you can talk in a calmer environment, or, ask another staff member / volunteer to take the others to an alternative location.
- It is always advisable to seek the support of another staff member / volunteer when confronting challenging behaviour.
- Outline to the child / young person the sanctions for their behaviour and discuss with them possible techniques they may adopt to avoid such situations in the future.
- Ensure you place yourself in an area with a clear escape route, should violence erupt.
- Given the nature of the situation and the extent of the challenging behaviour, the parents / guardians of the child / young person may need to be contacted and asked to collect the individual to take them home.
- Adequate time should be allowed for the child / young person to calm down and only then should their behaviour be discussed any supports and / or sanctions be imposed. Sanctions imposed must be fair and consistent at all times and understood by the child/ young person.
- Should your safety feel compromised and / or in danger, seek support from management and/ or Gardaí.
- All incidents will be recorded in the Incident report book statement form (Appendix 5).

## **18. DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE**

Child Abuse is generally described under the following five headings:

### **Neglect**

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults and medical care. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her wellbeing and/or development are severely affected.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between the care-giver and a child rather than a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse include:

- The imposition of negative attitudes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming.
- Conditional parenting.
- Emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer.
- Unrealistic, inappropriate expectations of the child.
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age appropriate opportunities for the child's cognitive and emotional development.
- Unreasonable or over harsh disciplinary measures.
- Exposure to domestic violence.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

### **Physical Abuse**

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

- Shaking a child
- Use of excessive force in handling a child
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Munchausen's syndrome by proxy

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child.
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.
- Sexual intercourse with a child be it oral, anal or vaginal.
- Sexual exploitation of a child.

### **Bullying**

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include:

- Teasing
- Taunting
- Threatening
- Hitting
- Extortion

Bullying may take place in any setting whether it be in schools, the home or in a youth service setting. The more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse.

While Child Abuse has been defined under the above five headings of neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and bullying, due consideration should also be given to instances of organised abuse and peer abuse.

### **Organised Abuse**

This occurs when one person enters into an area or institution and systematically entraps children for abusive purposes (mainly sexual) or when two or more adults conspire to abuse children using inducements or threats.

### **Peer Abuse**

In some cases of abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child. In these situations the Child Protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser. If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance.

## **19. Recognising Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse**

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The following are some of the possible indicators of Child Abuse:

### **Physical Indicators**

- Frequent bruising, fractures, cuts, burns and other injuries.
- Signs of neglect e.g. dirty appearance, undernourished looking.
- Failure to thrive.
- Genital injuries or soreness.
- Haemorrhages (retinal, subdural).
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Pregnancy.

### **Emotional Indicators**

- Unreasonable mood and/or behavioural changes.
- Aggressive or withdrawn.
- Lack of attachment.
- Depression or suicide attempts.
- Persistent nightmares, disturbed sleep, bedwetting, reluctance to go to bed.
- Fear of adults.
- Lack of peer relationships.
- Fear of the dark.
- Panic attacks.

### **Behavioural / sexual indicators**

- Over affectionate or inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge given the child's age - often demonstrated in language, playing or drawings.
- Fondling or exposure of genital areas - open masturbation.
- Sexually aggressive behaviour with others.
- Hints about sexual activity.
- Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities, which involve undressing, e.g. games, swimming.
- Overtly compliant and submissive.
- Strong dislike of physical contact.
- Prostitution - giving sexual favours in return for gifts or money.

### **Changes in normal behaviour for the person in question**

- Unwillingness to participate in certain activities or to go to certain places that once may have been liked.
- Running away from school or avoiding school.
- Separation activity.
- Isolation.
- Tiredness and poor concentration.

- Unexplained display of wealth or gifts (bribes) or a constant shortage of money and loss of good equipment, clothes etc. (taken by bullies).

### Illness

- Eating disorders such as overeating or anorexia.
- Alcoholism and/or drug addiction.
- Psychosomatic disorders.

Some signs are more indicative of abuse than others. These include:

- Disclosure of abuse by a child or a young person.
- Age inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge.
- Specific injuries or patterns of injuries.
- Under-age pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

### **Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of Child Abuse in young children (0 - 10 years):-**

- Mood change e.g. child becomes withdrawn, fearful, acting out.
- Lack of concentration (change in social performance).
- Bed wetting, soiling.
- Psychosomatic complaints, pains, headaches.
- Skin disorders.
- Nightmares, change in sleep patterns.
- School refusal.
- Separation anxiety.
- Loss of appetite.
- Isolation

### **Particular behavioural signs and symptoms suggestive of abuse in older children (10+ years)**

- Mood change e.g. depression, failure to communicate.
- Running away.
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse.
- Self-mutilation.
- Suicide attempts.
- Delinquency.
- Truancy.
- Eating disorders.
- Isolation.

All signs/indicators need careful assessment relative to the child's circumstances.

**NOTE:** In the area of Child Protection the current legal age of consent for sexual intercourse is 17.

It is important to remember that even for the experts, Child Abuse is very difficult to prove and the above are possible indicators of abuse. The most important point

is that you know the children you are working with, are they generally quiet or generally boisterous etc. By knowing the children it will be easier for you to notice any changes in appearance or behaviour that may cause concern.

## **20. REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN**

**What would constitute reasonable grounds for concern about the protection and welfare of children within Youth Work Ireland?**

The following extract from *Children First* sets out examples, which are by no means an exhaustive list, of reasonable grounds for concern to report to the HSE Child & Family Services:

- (a) A specific indication from the young person that he/she was abused.
- (b) A specific indication from a third party that a young person was abused.
- (c) Evidence, such as an injury, of behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- (d) Signs of injury that are consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- (e) An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- (f) Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional and physical neglect.

***Note: A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute a reasonable ground for concern. It is important to re-emphasise that the protection and welfare of the child must always be the first priority and if there is any reasonable grounds for concern that abuse exists the matter must be reported to the HSE Child and Family Services.***

### **Risk Factors for Consideration in Child Protection**

Alongside the signs and symptoms of abuse (Refer to the *HSE Child Protection Welfare Practice Handbook 2011* or Appendix 2) there may also be a number of known risk factors that need to be considered when responding to child protection concerns. Risk factors are features of a child's circumstances that are known to be associated with heightened risk to health, development and welfare.

Risk Factors associated with child abuse and maltreatment can broadly be grouped into four domains: parent or caregiver factors, family factors, child factors, environmental factors.

In addition other risk factors that need to be considered are:

- Age of the child.
- Domestic Violence/sexual violence.
- Parental mental health problems.
- Parental substance misuse.
- Parental intellectual disability.
- Unknown partners.
- Families who are 'uncooperative' or 'hard to engage'.
- Poverty and social exclusion.
- *Potential risk* to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable.

**Note - this is not an exhaustive list and often many children & their families can experience more than one of these risk factors or a combination of a number of them.**

### **Children and Young People with Additional Vulnerabilities**

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Such children include those with disabilities, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents /guardians or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse -neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse - are applicable, but may take a slightly different form. For example, abuse may take the form of deprivation of basic rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or the inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints.

### **Considering whether there is a Welfare Concern**

Listed below are questions that may help staff when they are concerned about a child's or young person's welfare:

- Is the child or young person behaving normally for his or her age and stage of development?
- Does the child or young person present a change in behaviour?
- For how long has this behaviour been observed?
- How often does it occur? Where?
- Has something happened that explain the child's or young person's behaviour?
- Is the child or young person showing signs of distress? If so, describe (e.g. behavioural, emotional, physical signs).
- Does the behaviour happen everywhere or just in the school, childcare or youth work setting?
- Is the child or young person suffering?
- Does the behaviour restrict the child or young person socially?
- Does the behaviour interfere with the child's or young person's development?
- What effect, if any, does it have on others (e.g. other children or young people)?
- What are the child's or young person's parents(s) /guardian(s) views, if known?



## 21. Anti-Bullying Policy

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### Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others.

### Types of Bullying

(Taken from “Bullying at School: Key Facts” by The Anti-Bullying Centre, Trinity College Dublin, 2001)

There are many different types of bullying that can occur.....

- **Verbal Bullying:** can leave children and young people feeling angry, frightened and powerless. If they are unable to share their feelings with someone else, verbal bullying can leave them emotionally bruised and physically exhausted. Their powers of concentration can suffer, adversely affecting their capacity for learning. Verbal attacks can be of a highly personal and sexual nature. They can be directed at the child’s or young person’s family, culture, race or religion. Malicious rumours are particularly insidious forms of verbal bullying.
- **Physical Bullying:** often written off as “horseplay”, “pretend” or “just a game” when challenged. While children can and do play roughly, in the case of bullying be aware that these “games” can be a precursor to vicious physical assaults. Both boys and girls indulge in physical bullying, boys perhaps more so as they have a greater tendency towards physical aggression.
- **Gesture Bullying:** there are many different forms of non-verbal threatening gestures which can convey intimidatory and frightening messages, for example gesturing a gun to a head or gesturing slitting a throat.
- **Exclusion Bullying:** this is particularly hurtful because it isolates the child or young person from his/her peer group and it is very hard for the child or young person to combat as it directly attacks their self-confidence and self-image.
- **Extortion Bullying:** younger children are particularly vulnerable to extortion bullying. Demands for money, possessions, equipment etc. may be made, often accompanied by threats. Children or young people may also be dared or forced to steal from others leaving them at the mercy of the bully and open to further intimidation.
- **E-Bullying:** in an ever-more technologically advanced world, a new strain of bullying has emerged amongst children and young people, which utilised web pages, e-mails and text messaging to abuse, intimidate and attack others, either directly or indirectly (for example rumour mongering).

### Policy Statement

All staff and volunteers who work for Youth Work Ireland are committed to creating an environment that is safe and supportive to all children and young people. We

believe that all children and young people with whom we work have the right to be protected from bullying and abusive behaviour. Bullying in any form is unacceptable in Youth Work Ireland.

### **Aim of Policy**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children and young people are protected from bullying behaviour. It is hoped that the policy will reduce the number of children and young people who experience bullying. The policy aims to ensure that incidents of bullying will be dealt with consistently and in a fair manner by setting out the procedures for dealing with such instances.

### **Objectives of Policy**

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with staff / volunteers, children and young people and parents / guardians.
- To develop an ethos which encourages children and young people to report incidents of bullying.
- To develop systems for recording and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To involve children and young people in promoting Youth Work Ireland anti-bullying policy, through class projects, poster making etc.
- To develop clear procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop support services for those affected by bullying and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are employed for all activities with young people and children.

### **Procedures For Dealing With Bullying**

- In any incident of bullying, a staff member should speak separately to the children or young people involved to get both sides with due regard to the rights of each person involved.
- All reports of bullying will be recorded, investigated and dealt with by an appropriate staff member.
- The staff member will interview all involved in a calm manner and will seek answers to what, where, when, who and why.
- The child or young person should be praised for their courage in coming forward to report the bullying incident and or behaviour.

- Reassure the child or young person that being bullied is the responsibility of bullies and they are not to blame themselves.
- Reassure the child or young person of the support of staff in Youth Work Ireland in ensuring that the bullying doesn't happen again.
- If the staff member dealing with the complaint concludes that bullying has taken place, then the perpetrator will be met with to discuss the bullying behaviour. They will be informed of the disciplinary action that will be taken as a result of this bullying behaviour and will be supported in undertaking any relevant training and interventions to address their inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff members will at all times be sensitive to the needs of the young person, who may not wish it be made known that they reported an incident of bullying. Such incidents will be dealt with in group work and/or key working sessions.
- Parents will be informed of the incident of bullying and of the outcome of the investigation.
- For less serious incidents of bullying, the child or young person will be asked to apologise to the victim and asked not to engage in any further bullying behaviour. Examples may include slugging, name calling, gestures etc. Staff would then closely monitor the behaviour of the child or young person.
- For serious incidents of bullying, the perpetrator will be suspended or excluded from training / activities, depending on the nature of the incident(s). Examples may include assaults or threats of physical assaults, exclusion, racist remarks, homophobic comments etc. and may require referral to H.S.E. All serious incidents of bullying should be discussed with the Designated Person.
- The examples given above are not exhaustive and as such the Anti bullying policy, along with the other sections of this document, is under constant review. A series of anti-bullying posters are displayed throughout various sections of the organisation and the topic is built into a number of personal and social development programmes run with young people.

## **22 Complaints Reporting Procedure**

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It is the policy of Youth Work Ireland to encourage young people, parents and Member Youth Service to provide comment and feedback on any aspect of our work, inclusive of any complaints they may have.

Youth Work Ireland is committed to this practice, as it is acknowledged that an open, transparent environment benefits all stakeholders of the organisation and allows the service to monitor and regularly review programmes. This forms an integral part of the organisation's commitment to best practice.

All staff or volunteers need to actively involve young people in the planning and decision-making of programmes and actively seek feedback on programmes and activities. The suggestions or complaints expressed by young people should always be taken into consideration and must receive a response. An Appendix (7) outlining the Youth Work Ireland complaints system has been produced and provided.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is any form of criticism or suggestion in respect to any aspect of a service or programme. A complaint should not be confused with a Child Protection concern for which the reporting procedure must be followed. When a complaint is received that leads to a concern about a child's safety or well-being, Youth Work Ireland must ensure that it acts appropriately and in the best interests of the child, and that Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children Guidelines are implemented as appropriate. The welfare of the child is paramount at all times.

A distinction must also be made between:

- Minor complaints that can be handled informally and internally within Member Youth Service, youth club / group / project or National Office.
- Complaints requiring a formal process within a Member Youth Service or National Office.
- Complaints requiring a formal process within Youth Work Ireland collectively.

### **Steps to be followed in handling complaints:**

1. Any member of staff or volunteer with Youth Work Ireland may take a complaint from any young person or parent.
2. All young people and parents of young people who access the service are fully entitled to give comment or feedback, whether positive or negative, on any aspect of the service provided.

3. A complaints form must be completed by the person making the complaint. A member of staff can support a person in doing this. (see Appendix & Complaints Form)
4. Volunteers must submit this form to their designated club support worker who will pass the information to the youth work manager. Staff must submit this form to their line manager.
5. All complaints are monitored by a manager to make changes to programmes / events if necessary, to ensure a quality service is being provided. Any action to be taken will be recorded on the complaints form.
6. The person who made the complaint will be responded to in writing within five working days, unless otherwise requested.
7. If the manager considers it necessary, a meeting will be organised between the manager and the person who made the complaint.
8. The person will be informed if there is any follow-up action or recommendation for change as the result of the complaint. If it is deemed unnecessary to make any change, the person who made the complaint will be informed of the reason for this.

### **Accidents**

All accidents, however minor, should be recorded on the Accident report form (**Appendix 6**). The report should be completed and forwarded to Youth Work Ireland immediately.

In the event of an accident, parents or guardians should be informed immediately. Where medical attention is required, this should be sought as a matter of urgency and recorded in the accident report form.

## **23. Reporting Procedures and role of the DLP**

The following are the reporting procedures for *formal complaints* both for the National Office of Youth Work Ireland and its Designated Person and the Member Youth Services and their respective designated persons. (See list of designated Persons and their Deputies above)

- Any reports should be carried out using the appropriate form (See Appendix 5.)
- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed within the parameters outlined in the confidentiality procedure.
- Actions and outcomes will be noted and kept as a matter of record by the designated person.
- All details must be recorded, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts. Information recorded must be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts.

- Inform the Designated Person or the deputy, if unavailable inform the deputy.
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the TUSLA unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk.
- The Designated Person may contact the TUSLA Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report.
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (See confidentiality statement)
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Duty Social Worker in TUSLA area using the standard reporting form available from the TUSLA. (See Attachment.) Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the TUSLA without delay.
- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly on either 067 41934 or 0504 27604.
- In case of emergencies outside of TUSLA Social Work Department Hours contact the Gardaí on 0504 25100. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.

## 24. The Procedures to follow on Day Trips and Residentials with Young People

When taking young people away on day trips and residential, staff and volunteers should always be attentive to such matters as:

- Safety - activities, buildings, transport etc.
- Insurance - ensure that it is adequate to cover all aspects of the trip.
- Parental consent - staff / volunteers must ensure that they have written consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) before taking young people away on trips. It must also be ensured that they have permission for the young person to receive medical treatment in the event of an emergency.
- Staff / volunteers should ensure that they are made aware of any medical information which may be relevant e.g. allergies.
- Sleeping arrangements - sleeping areas for males and females should be in separate and supervised quarters and supervised by at least two people.
- Adequate supervision should be available for the duration of the residential. Provisions should be made for any emergencies that may arise i.e. should a young person take ill, or become homesick then transport should be at hand and there should be enough staff / volunteers present to deal with the situation and also to supervise the other young people.
- Staff / volunteers should respect the privacy and never enter the bedroom or bathroom of a young person without knocking or letting the young person know you are entering. Time should never be spent alone with a young person during a residential.
- If in an emergency situation an adult considers it necessary to enter a young person's bedroom / bathroom without another adult present, they should:
  - a) Keep the door open
  - b) Immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility
  - c) Make a written record of the circumstances
- Staff / volunteers should always be aware of avoiding compromising situations with young people.
- Maintaining standards and good youth work practice is essential for residentials. Please ensure that procedures in relation to the Code of Behaviour are followed.

## APPENDICES



## Statement of Commitment

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the standards and procedures outlined in Youth Work Ireland Child Protection policy.

I agree with the principles contained therein and will abide by them throughout my association with Youth Work Ireland.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Job title / role

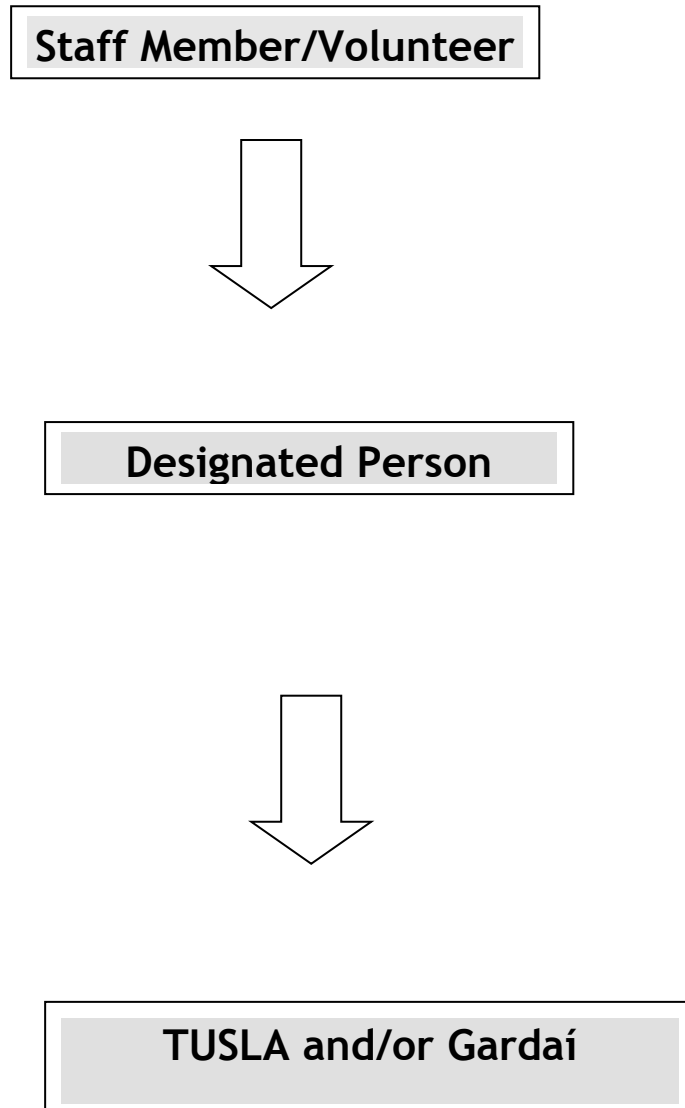
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed off by:

## Internal Referral Procedure Chart

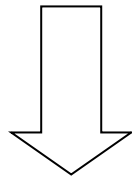
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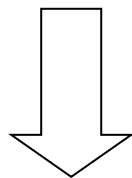
# Allegations against a Staff Member / Volunteer Chart

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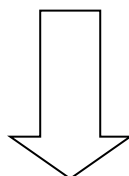
**Referral**



**Designated Person**



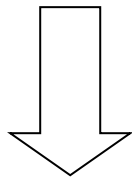
**CEO**



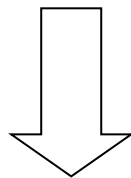
**TUSLA and/or Gardai**

## Allegations against the CEO Chart

**Referral**



**Designated Person**



**Chairperson of the Board**

**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**  
(To be completed as soon as possible after the incident)

Youth project/service name:

**1. Details of person reporting incident:**

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

Job title/position \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Persons(s) involved in incident: (Use continuation sheet if necessary)**

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

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age and gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age and gender: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Details of the incident:**

Describe the nature of the incident (Use continuation sheet if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What exactly happened:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of incident: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Specify the activity where the incident took place:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Where did the incident occur?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. What follow up action was taken and by whom?**

The following action was taken

by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Name and details of any witness(es) to the incident**

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Job title/position:

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Signed by person reporting:**

Person(s) reporting: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness (es) to the incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date reported to project leader or management committee member:

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Signed by project leader or management committee member:**

Signature:

---

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

***Completed incident report to be held on file in youth project/service***

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM  
(To be completed as soon as possible after the accident)

Youth project/service name:

*As insurance companies may have their own specific requirements it is essential that the youth project/service agrees the content of the accident report form with their insurers. This is an internal and confidential document for use by the youth project/service and their insurance company.*

**1. Details of person reporting accident:**

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

Job title/position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of accident: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Persons(s) affected / injured in accident (Use continuation sheet if necessary)**

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

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

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age and gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age and gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Are the young people registered member(s) of your Youth Project/Service?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which group? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they employees/volunteers of the Youth

Project/Service? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what position(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_



**3. Details of any witness(es) to accident:**

Name:

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Contact Address:

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Telephone No:

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Job Title/position:

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**4. Specify the activity where the accident took place:**

Activity:

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Where did the accident occur:

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**5. What exactly happened and what was the nature of the accident?(Use continuation sheet if necessary)**

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By whom:

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

***Copy of completed Accident Report to be held on file in Youth project/service***

Youth Work Ireland - Formal Complaint Procedure

**(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)**

**YOUR NAME, ADDRESS & CONTACT NUMBER**

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**DATE ON WHICH THE ALLEGED INCIDENT HAPPENED:**

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**LOCATION OF ALLEGED INCIDENT:**

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**NATURE OF COMPLAINT: (E.G. Harassment, Bullying etc.)**

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**NAME OF PARTY OR PARTIES INVOLVED:**

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**PLEASE GIVE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE ALLEGED INCIDENT:**

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List of Member Youth Services completed but in excel sheet and no matter how I tried it wouldn't transfer into this document. I will get Gina to have a look.