

SEANCHAÍ
Kerry Writers'
MUSEUM

**CHILD PROTECTION & VULNERABLE ADULT
PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

Kerry Writers' Museum is committed to a child-centered approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of **Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children**, published by the Department of Health and Children. We understand that as an organisation we should ensure there is awareness of our policies, not just among our employees but also amongst our board members and our volunteers.

Implemented Procedures:

Code of behaviour for all staff, board members and volunteers who are present at our Board of Management/Staff Meetings or present at any of our Children's Events.

Child Centered Approach:

- Treat all children and young people equally;
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Listen to and respect children and young people;
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Treat all children and young people as individuals;
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space;
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g. school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

Good Practice:

- Register each child/young person (name, address, telephone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact), file them and keep them within easy access for appropriate staff member(s), i.e. in our 'Children's Programme file in the filing Cabinet';
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs and make sure the facilities available during readings and other events are catered to all the children's needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person: **Cara Trant** and follow reporting procedures;
- Organizations should have an anti-bullying policy. Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy as set out in the anti-bullying Policy in 'Our Duty to Care', Fact sheet 2, Department of Health and Children, 2002);
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Observe appropriate dress and behavior;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved.

Always:

- Ensure clear communication between children's authors, artists and performers and Kerry Writers' Museum in relation to accepted guidelines and a prompt sheet for artists;
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control, take prompt action;
- Avoid allowing any writer or artist to conduct a session on their own. Unless this is not possible and in this circumstance such readings or workshops should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers;
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Inappropriate Behaviour:

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

Physical Contact:

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

Health and Safety:

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly;
- However, work emanating from the artistic process and work of artistic content will not be censored in this way.

Reporting Procedures:

- All arts organisations should appoint a Designated Person to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare within the organisation and to respond to any concerns that may be identified. A deputy should also be appointed to cover this role when the Designated Person is unavailable or if he or she is directly involved in an incident, suspicion or accusation;
- The Designated Person and his or her deputy should be in senior positions within the organisation;
- Appropriate training should be provided for both;
- Think about which senior people in your arts organisation would be appropriate for the role of Designated Person and Deputy Designated Person;
- They should be comfortable dealing with the topic of child protection and welfare;

- Professional development and network support should be provided for the Designated Person and his or her deputy;
- The 'Standard form for reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns,' is attached and will be used by the Kerry Writers' Museum when, or if required;
- The local duty Social Worker is in Moyderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry and can be contacted on (066) 7184890, 066 7184887, 066 7184869;
- The local Garda Station is Listowel, and their number is (068) 21000;
- It should be very clear to all staff, primary carers and children/young people who has been designated to deal with child protection issues and how to contact him or her;
- The following is an example of a staff notice about a Designated Person:
 Cara Trant has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of Designated Person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate;

Cara Trant can be contacted at (068)22212/ (087) 2788903;

- The following excerpt from Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2 - p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:
 - a) specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
 - b) an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;
 - c) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse
 - d) and unlikely to be caused another way;
 - e) an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with;
 - f) an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative;
 - g) indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse;
 - h) an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
 - i) consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Recording Procedures:

- Every arts organisation should have a system and mechanism for recording concerns about the protection of children and young people, e.g., an incident book. Policy should state very clearly where records are kept and who has access to them. They should be stored securely and confidentiality should be maintained;
- Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people;
- Suspicions;
- Concerns;
- Worrying observations;
- Behavioural changes;
- Actions and outcomes.

Dealing with a Disclosure:

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

Reporting Procedures:

- Organisations should develop very clear reporting procedures for matters relating to a child/young person's safety and welfare;
- The reporting procedure should be known and accessible to all staff;
- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed;
- Actions and outcomes should be noted;
- Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or its closure and the facts (for example in an incident book). Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts;
- Inform the Designated Person.
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers.
- Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk;
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive;
- Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be: made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;
- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly;
- In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/ young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.

Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement:

- We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:
- Within Kerry Writers' Museum, roles and responsibilities relating to each position should be clearly defined for each individual job whether it be paid or voluntary;
- Kerry Writers' Museum posts will be advertised widely;
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form;
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form;
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary;
- Staff and artists will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process;
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
- Some of the exclusions would include:
 - Any child-related convictions;
 - Refusal to sign application form and declaration form;
 - Insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
 - Concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- There will be a relevant probationary period (three months) for Kerry Writers' Museum staff. All artists should also fulfill mentoring requirements as per ;
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought;
- It is advisable that arts organisations seek legal advice when developing policy and procedures in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of staff.

Staff Management Policy Statement:

- To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that new staff will:
 - Take part in a mandatory induction training session;
 - Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
 - Undergo a twelve week trial period;
- All staff will:
 - Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
 - Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
 - Be provided with child protection training.

Policy Statement on the Involvement of Primary Carers:

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

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

Respond to the needs of the child or young person;

Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk;

- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate;
- As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first.

To that end we will:

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

Dealing with an allegation against Staff:

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person, Cara Trant, Manager of Kerry Writers' Museum who can be contacted on (087) 2788903 will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Cara Trant will also deal with issues related to the staff member.
 - The first priority being is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
 - The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner;
 - The staff member will be informed as soon as possible and will be told of the nature of the allegation;
 - The staff member should be given the opportunity to respond;
 - The Chairperson of Kerry Writers' Museum Board of Management, David Browne who can be contacted at (086) 8623377 will be informed as soon as possible;
 - Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with the Health Service Executive (the Duty Social Workers no. is 066 7184887 or 066 7184869) and the Gardaí, (the local Superintendent being Tim O'Keeffe who can be reached at 068 21000);
 - After consultation, Cara Trant should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

In the event of Complaints or Comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within three weeks;
- Cara Trant has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

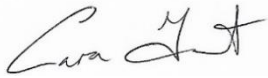
Accidents Procedure:

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

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed and updated in June 2025.

Cara Trant



Date:

_____ 10/06/24 _____