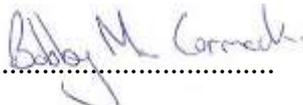




IDEA’s Child Safeguarding, Policy Procedures and Guidelines

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IDEA CEO:
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Date: 20/09/25


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Date: 24/09/2025

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1. Introduction:

IDEA is the national network for Development Education in Ireland and the leading voice for the sector. We represent members involved in the practice, promotion and advancement of Development Education in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Together we work to strengthen Development Education/Global Citizenship Education in Ireland and to raise awareness of the crucial role of Development Education in achieving an equal, just and sustainable future.

Although we are not a youth work organisation, we do engage at times with the public and youth organisations and understand that our child safeguarding responsibilities can involve the following type of indirect engagement:

- Young people nominated and supported by an external organisation to represent IDEA at a meeting, event, launch, consultation, forums, serve on a working group etc...

And the possibility of:

- Attendance of young person at an IDEA public event
- Communication with a young person online - via IDEA social media platforms

And

- Supporting youth organisations in the delivery of our Erasmus+ programme, and other future projects

IDEA is committed to the protection of children and young people with whom we work and advocate for, and to promoting good practice within our organisation. IDEA is committed to promoting the rights of the child including the participation of children and young people in matters that affect them.

IDEA is committed to adhering to and implementing Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Children First Act 2015. The best interests and the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration underpinning all IDEA interactions and decisions.

This policy applies to all IDEA personnel. This includes staff, volunteers, interns, students on placement, those availing of work experience, Board members and contractors while engaging in IDEA activities and programmes. All IDEA personnel must receive this policy as part of their induction and are required to sign up and agree to abide by these policies and procedures.

This Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy sits within a wider suite of IDEA's related policies and procedures to help ensure that the young people we engage with, directly and indirectly, are protected from harm as far as practicable.

Whilst this policy provides IDEA's personnel with guidance on identifying and responding to child protection and welfare concerns and reporting these concerns, it must also be considered in relation to our commitment to Child Safeguarding. IDEA has developed a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) which is reviewed on a 24-month basis. This CSS declares our commitment to safeguarding of children and outlines the risk assessment of the potential for harm to children and young people that are engaged directly with IDEA and the procedures that we have in place to mitigate against these risks.

This CSS is displayed publicly, on our premises, and is available on our website.

"Child Safeguarding is defined as ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by workers and volunteers to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, including online concerns, should these arise. Child Safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential". (Tusla, A Guide for Policy and Procedure)

Safeguarding and Child Protection will be considered at staff induction, staff training and team and board meetings. IDEAS's DLP will initiate a review of this policy and procedures every 24 months, along with our Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, or sooner if necessary due to substantial or relevant changes in how we engage with young people or changes in legislation or policy.

Along with the Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement this policy should also be read in conjunction with other IDEA policies and procedures including:

- IDEA Code of Behaviour
- IDEA's Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures
- IDEA's Garda Vetting Policy and Procedures
- IDEA's Safeguarding Risk Assessment Document

Creating a Safe Environment

IDEA has a Code of Behaviour in place for all IDEA personnel. Our Code of Behaviour. It outlines what we expect from personnel. The code of behaviour helps us to protect the young people we work with from abuse, helps staff create a safe environment with clear expectations of the do's and don't in their behaviour and approach in working with young people.

See the IDEA Code of Behaviour on our website: <https://www.ideaonline.ie/safeguarding-policies>

Appointing a Designated Liaison Person

Children First advises that organisations that provide services for children/young people and families should consider appointing a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP that will act as a resource to any staff/volunteer who has a child protection or welfare concern.

In IDEA the DLP and Deputy DLP are as follows:

Ruairí McKiernan – ruairi@ideaonline.ie

Elaine Mahon– elaine@ideaonline.ie

The DLP's have the following responsibilities within IDEA:

- Be fully familiar with IDEA's responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children and fully knowledgeable on the guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures.
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from IDEA personnel and consider if reasonable grounds for concern for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Ensure that IDEA's reporting procedures are followed so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker, if necessary.
- Where reasonable grounds for concern exist, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of IDEA, using the Tusla Web Portal.
- Act as a liaison with the statutory authorities (Tusla and An Garda Síochána).
- Where necessary, report jointly with mandated persons.
- Inform parents/guardians when making a report to Tusla unless this is likely to endanger the child/young person, to place you, the reporter at risk, or to impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Maintain proper records on all child protection or welfare concerns, and allegations of child abuse as well as any action taken in response to these concerns.
- Ensure there is a secure system in place to manage and store all child protection and welfare concerns in a confidential manner.
- Provide feedback to the referrer as appropriate.
- In the case of an allegation against IDEA personnel, the DLP will deal with the child protection report and support the child/young person and their family.
- Advise on good practice for staff and volunteers and remain informed about current developments in relation to child safeguarding policy and practice through attendance at appropriate training and briefings
- Ensure all IDEA staff are adequately trained and informed on IDEA's child safeguarding guidelines.
- Liaise with IDEA board regarding the review, update and implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Recruitment, Support and Supervision and Training

Ensuring that new personnel are suitable for working with young people should substantially reduce the risk of a young person experiencing harm.

The recruitment steps in IDEA include application forms, reference checks, garda vetting, induction, probation periods, training, and support and supervision.

Further guidance is available in IDEA's recruitment policy and Garda Vetting policy.

Good practice in management and supervision of workers and volunteers after appointment is a further essential safeguard to help keep children/young people safe. IDEA carries out regular supervision and support meetings for staff and safeguarding issues are addressed.

The Children First act 2015 requires organisations to maintain child safeguarding and protection training records of staff.

All IDEA staff are required to attend or participate in appropriate training according to their role and responsibilities. This training should include the recognition of the signs of abuse, understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children and know the procedures to follow if/when reporting concerns.

IDEA gathers and keeps a record of training information for staff and volunteers, and this is monitored regularly by the DLP.

2. Recognising Child Safeguarding and Protection

The purpose of this policy is to provide IDEA personnel with basic information on the nature of child abuse and child welfare concerns and to provide guidance to personnel on the procedures they must follow. This policy also helps to meet IDEA's responsibilities in its legislative and best practice requirements.

All IDEA personnel must be alert to the possibility that children and young people with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. All reasonable concerns about a child's or young person's welfare or protection must be reported to Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

Child Welfare Concerns

Definition of Child Welfare Concern "A problem experienced directly by a child, or by the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's welfare or development, which warrants assessment and support." HSE Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook

Examples of welfare issues may include:

- There may be a hygiene issue with the young person because of insufficient finances of the parents/guardians to provide clean clothes for the young person.
- A series of concerns which when combined, creates an overall picture of the circumstances which the child may be living in.
- The young person may have specific needs and the parents are unable to support the young person.
- Young person has mental health issues and the parents/guardians are unable to meet their children's needs and support is required.

Child Protection Concerns

A Child Protection Concern arises when child abuse occurs where a child is ill-treated in some manner and requires protection. Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. For information on child abuse definitions features and examples please see:

[Definitions of child abuse Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

See Appendix One for Other Factors in Relation to Child Abuse - Information on Peer Abuse, Organised Abuse, Bullying.

The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child neglect or abuse: Considering the possibility; Looking out for signs of neglect or abuse; Recording of information.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The following are some examples of reasonable grounds for concern to report to Tusla:

- (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 which 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. Examples of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse or dysfunctional behaviour
- (f) Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child or young person is suffering from emotional and physical neglect.

Please Note: A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute a reasonable ground for concern. IDEA personnel are reminded if they are unsure as to whether reasonable grounds for concern have been met, they should discuss with their Designated Liaison Person.

Mandated Persons

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people, many of whom are professionals, to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla - Child and Family Agency. These mandated persons must also assist Tusla, on request, in its assessment of child protection concerns about children and young people who have been the subject of a mandated report.

Although IDEA does not currently employ any staff who are categorised as 'mandated persons' according to Children First Act 2015, all future roles will be reviewed against Schedule 2 of the Act. [Mandated Persons Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

Dealing with Disclosures from a Young Person

A young person may disclose to someone in IDEA that they are being harmed or abused. This usually means they look at this person as a trusted adult in their life. They are sharing very sensitive and personal information so we should treat it with respect and confidentiality

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of Children First Guidance and legislation

3. Reporting Procedures

All IDEA personnel have a responsibility and duty of care to report any allegations or concerns that they may have in relation to the safety of a young person.

Mandated Persons

If the concern reaches the threshold of harm, mandated persons are required to make a mandated report to Tusla. This obligation must be carried out by the mandated person and cannot be carried out by the DLP on their behalf. In IDEA mandated persons can make a joint mandated report with the DLP.

If a concern does not reach the threshold of harm for reporting but there are reasonable grounds for concern, mandated persons should follow IDEA's standard reporting procedures and report the concern to the DLP, as outlined below.

“Harm” as defined in the Children First Act 2015 means, in relation to a child: (a) Assault, ill-treatment, or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or (b) The sexual abuse of a child, whether by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances, or otherwise.

Reporting procedures:

- Concerns should be reported by IDEA personnel to the DLP without delay.
- The DLP may consult informally with Tusla’s duty social work for advice and guidance prior to making a report

- If the DLP determines that reasonable grounds for concern do not exist, they must provide the reporter with a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported and advise them they are free to make a report to Tusla or the Gardai if they remain concerned.
- If a decision is taken to report the DLP should report via the Tusla portal.
[Tusla Portal](#)
- Reports should be made to the duty social work team in the area where the child resides. [Duty Social Work Teams/ Dedicated Contact Points Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#)
- A copy of the report should be downloaded and stored by the DLP
- Acknowledgement of receipt of the report from Tusla must also be stored
- If the risk is immediate and Tusla are unavailable An Garda Siochana should be contacted immediately.
- All actions and communication, and attempted actions and communication in relation to child protection concerns will be recorded promptly, accurately, and stored securely.
- IDEA will continue to work with the young person following a report to Tusla where appropriate and under guidance from the statutory authorities.
- If the referral does not receive an appropriate response, the DLP may contact the appropriate social worker/team leader in Tusla to seek clarification.
- Supports for the child/young person and staff/volunteers involved should be considered throughout the process

REMEMBER:

Under no circumstances should a child or young person be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending Tusla intervention.

Emergencies/Out of Hours-

Where the child/young person is at immediate risk of harm and Tusla are not available, the Gardai should be contacted. The DLP will follow-up with a written report via the Tusla Portal as soon as possible afterwards.

Informing Parents

It is best practice that parents/guardians are informed if you are making a report to Tusla unless doing so:

- Is likely to further endanger the child/young person.
- Impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Put the reporter at risk of harm.

The DLP will make this decision following advice and guidance from Tusla. If the decision is made not to inform parents/guardians, the reasons for this should be recorded. IDEA will

consider who is best placed to inform parents/guardians in each instance and will follow Tusla's guidance.

Retrospective Reporting

Increasingly, adults are disclosing abuse that took place in their childhood. This is referred to as a retrospective disclosure. When this type of disclosure is made, it is essential to establish if there is any current risk to a child/young person who may be in contact with the person who is the subject of the abuse allegation. This is important even where the children/young people about whom there may be a concern are still to be identified. Adult reporters should be encouraged and supported to report their abuse. They may choose not to come forward personally to report their concerns. However, if you are aware there may be an ongoing risk to a child you should follow IDEA's standard reporting procedures. The DLP can consult with Tusla if you are unsure about reporting. Reports of childhood abuse by adults should be submitted via the Tusla Portal and the Retrospective Abuse Form completed

Reporting Peer Abuse

If a child/young person alleges that they have been abused by another child or young person, this must be taken seriously, and standard reporting procedures should be adhered to. The DLP must be informed, and reports will be submitted to Tusla for both the child/young person who has been abused and the child/young person who is subject to the abuse allegation. Advice will be sought from the statutory authorities with regarding to informing the parents/carers of the children/young people concerned and in relation to the continued engagement in IDEA of the alleged offending young person in order to ensure the safety of other young people.

Allegations Against IDEA Personnel

If an allegation is made against an adult within IDEA the rules of natural justice and relevant employment law must be followed.

IDEA has a dual responsibility to both the child/young person and the worker/volunteer.

IDEA will provide support to the child/young person who has made the allegation and the person who reported the allegation, and the worker/volunteer who is the subject of the allegation.

Two separate procedures should be followed when an allegation is made:

- The standard reporting procedure, as outlined above, to Tusla in respect of the child/young person and the person who is subject to the abuse allegation.
- IDEA's internal personnel procedure for dealing with the worker/volunteer (in IDEA's HR Handbook.)

Tusla recommends that the same person is not responsible for reporting to Tusla and the employment/contractual issues. In IDEA the Deputy DLP will be responsible for the protection of the child/young person, supporting the child/young person and their family and making the

report to the statutory authorities. The CEO will support the worker/volunteer and follow the internal personnel procedure. Any allegation will be dealt with sensitively and appropriate levels of confidentiality must be ensured. IDEA will seek professional advice in relation to its responsibilities under employment and other law as required.

4. Managing Information recording, storing, sharing, confidentiality

Recording Concerns

If abuse is suspected, it is important to establish the grounds for concern by observing and monitoring the situation. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context, and any other information that may be relevant. If a young person makes a disclosure to a staff member/volunteer, this should be recorded as soon as possible afterwards to ensure the information is recorded accurately. Recording systems regarding child protection procedures should be separate from other general records in IDEA and should be accessible only to those who have a 'need to know' basis i.e. the individual involved and the DLP.

Storing Records

Records on child protection/child welfare concerns must be securely held in a Child Protection Folder which has access restricted/is password encrypted. The DLP and Deputy DLP must have access to these files.

Confidentiality

IDEA is committed to ensuring people's information is considered carefully and confidentially. However, in relation to child protection and welfare it is important that information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.

REMEMBER:

- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality
- The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection
- No guarantee of confidentiality is given where the best interests of the child/young person are at risk
- Parents and children/young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk

In all matters of confidentiality, a young person's age and their understanding need to be taken into account. As a general rule, the younger the child, the greater the need to involve parents/guardians.

Appendix One

Others factors in relation to Child Abuse

Peer Abuse-In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child or young person. In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child or young person, the child protection procedures must be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser, that is, it should be considered a child care and protection issue for both children and/or young people. Abusive behaviour that is perpetrated by a young person must be acted upon. 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.

Organised Abuse - occurs when either one person moves into an area or institution and systematically entraps children for abusive purposes (mainly sexually) or when two or more adults conspire to similarly abuse children, using inducements. Organised abuse can occur in different settings such as the community, the family or extended family or an institution. Another form of organised abuse is child trafficking, whereby the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments is used for the purpose of either sexual or labour exploitation

Circumstances which can increase vulnerability to abuse- Some children and young people may be more vulnerable to abuse or harm than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child or young person may be more vulnerable to abuse or harm in their lives. In particular, children and young people with disabilities, with communication difficulties, in care or living away from home, or with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to abuse or harm.

Bullying - It is recognised that bullying affects the lives of an increasing number of children and can be the cause of genuine concerns about a child's welfare. Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children and young people in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact, bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.