

Irish Writers Centre Child Safeguarding Statement

Name of service:

The Irish Writers Centre, 19 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Nature of service provided:

The Irish Writers Centre has long been a hub of literary activity, supporting established and aspiring writers throughout Ireland from its base at the heart of Dublin's cultural quarter. It is a non-profit organisation, a registered charity, with the remit of promoting Irish writers and literature at home and abroad.

Founded in 1991, the Irish Writers Centre is the national resource centre for Irish literature. Our mission is to support and promote writers at all stages of their development by offering a diverse programme of writing courses and workshops led by established writers across a range of genres including memoir, poetry, playwriting, short-stories and the novel. We run seminars, lectures and readings related to the art of writing and host a monthly Takin' the Mic, where members of the public are encouraged to share their creative endeavours. The Irish Writers Centre welcomes writers, readers and international visitors keen to develop their career as a writer.

We at the Irish Writers Centre, are committed to a child-centred 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 adhere to the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.

The Irish Writers Centre is committed to an individual focus and best practice approach to our work with children and young people. It is central to the philosophy of the Irish Writers Centre that children, adults and staff members, volunteers, interns and artists are unconditionally respected and kept safe from harm while using our services. Our normal practices and behaviour actively promote delivery of excellent services to writers of all ages as individuals in a safe and engaging environment, where the welfare of the child is paramount. We will adhere to the *Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* by having and implementing child protection policies and procedures.

Principles to safeguard children from harm:

Below are the Irish Writers Centre's principles and procedures which should be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while availing of our services both within our building and off-site.

- All Irish Writers Centre staff are Garda vetted.
- All Irish Writers Centre staff have undertaken Tusla online Child Protection Training – Children First E-Learning.
- All child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.
- Children are always accompanied by a parent/guardian, teacher or member of Irish Writers Centre staff while in the Irish Writers Centre venue.
- When the Irish Writers Centre is open to the public there is always a member of staff on duty to monitor all those entering the building.

- A child in need of personal support because of illness, physical needs or any form of distress, shall be referred in the first place to his/her parent/guardian or teacher. In the absence of a guardian, the staff member who is working with or supervising that activity will provide such support. A parent/guardian or teacher should inform a member of staff if there are any specific needs required during a child's participation at an Irish Writers Centre event.

Risk Assessment:

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk identified

Procedure in place to manage risk identified

1. Non-compliance with the Irish Writers Centre's Child Protection Policy.

All staff and volunteers are provided with the Child Protection Policy.

Any breach of the Child Protection Policy will be reported to the relevant line manager.

The Child Protection Policy is reviewed every 2 years.

2. Delay in making referrals to Tusla.

All staff are trained and supported to ensure they can act promptly and not delay in contacting the Designated Liaison Person or Tusla when they deem a referral may be required.

3. Receipt of complaints of alleged child abuse where a member of the Irish Writers Centre is the alleged perpetrator.

All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liaison Person or Tusla. Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee.

4. Receipt of complaint of alleged child abuse where a parent, guardian or teacher is the alleged perpetrator.

All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liaison Person or Tusla. The school will be notified.

5. Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff.

All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liaison Person or directly to Tusla.

6. A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff.

All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liaison Person or directly to Tusla.

Procedures

The Irish Writers Centre's Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, and the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our services

Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children

Procedure for provision of, and access to, child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm

Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla or the Gardaí as appropriate

All procedures listed are available upon request.

Implementation

The Irish Writers Centre recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Statement will be reviewed on 27 May 2020 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signatories of this statement: Orla Martin, Administrator & Valerie Bistany, Director

Name and contact details:

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For queries in relation to this Child Safeguarding Statement please contact Orla Martin, Administrator, at the address above or email info@writerscentre.ie or Valerie Bistany, Director, email director@writerscentre.ie