



## **Child Protection Policy The Source Arts Centre**

The Source Arts Centre's Child Protection Policy is comprised of the following sections

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### **1. Introduction : What children can expect from us**

The Source Arts Centre acknowledges it has a responsibility for the safety of children involved in arts projects, attending classes or otherwise under its temporary care. It also recognises that good child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with The Source Arts Centre's work, including staff, as they can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

The Source Arts Centre is committed to practices which protect children from harm. For the purpose of this policy, The Source Arts Centre's staff includes not only its full-time employees but part time staff, artists and workshop leaders, and other contracted staff.

#### What children can expect from us

The Source Arts Centre promises all children visiting or involved in projects at the arts centre that all staff (full/part-time, casual and contracted) will:

- develop an awareness of the issues which can cause children harm

- safeguard all children in the care of the arts centre, thereby fully recognising and accepting their responsibilities as temporary guardians
- report concerns in accordance with the arts centre's procedure, whether they be concerns raised directly by children themselves, or concerns a staff member may have about a child or about someone else's behaviour
- ensure and encourage a sense of mutual respect between children, as well as between adults and children, during all activities at the arts centre
- foster a supportive, trusting and fun environment for learning, exploration and creative discovery.

The Source Arts Centre will endeavour to achieve the above by:

- a) adopting child protection procedures and a code of practice for all who work on behalf of the organisation;
- b) reporting concerns to the authorities;
- c) following carefully procedures for recruitment and selection of staff, and volunteers;
- d) providing effective management and supervision of staff, and volunteers through support, training induction and review of work practices.
- e) Treating all information with utmost confidentiality.
- f) Circulating information to staff, primary carers and participants on a need to know basis.
- g) Having a policy for dealing with allegations against staff.
- h) Instituting a complaints and comments procedure.
- i) Having an incidents and accidents procedure.

The Source Arts Centre is committed to reviewing its Child Protection Policy and code of practice annually.

## **2. Child Protection Policy Statement**

It is The Source Arts Centre's Policy that:

1. All staff working on behalf of the Centre accept responsibility for the welfare of children who come into contact with the centre in connection with its tasks and functions, and that they will report any concerns about a child or somebody else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down.
2. There is a designated child protection person(s) within the organisation who will take action following any expression of concern, and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.
3. Designated child protection person(s) know how to make appropriate referrals to child protection agencies.
4. All those who are in contact with children on behalf of The Source Arts Centre should adhere to the code of practice in relation to children.

5. Information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be clearly recorded as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and who should pass it on.
6. The National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children states that the “welfare of the child is paramount” this means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated by the relevant body and a parent referral made.
7. The Arts Centre’s policy on duty of care to children will be referred to or included in recruitment, training, and the policies are openly and widely available to staff and actively promoted within the organisation.
8. A culture of mutual respect between children and those who represent the Arts Centre in all its activities will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practice in this context.
9. It is part of the Arts Centre’s acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that anybody who encounters child protection concerns in the context of their work on behalf of the Centre will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

### **3. Code of Practice**

The Source Arts Centre expects that all staff, which for these purposes includes anybody in paid or unpaid work on its behalf, will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children. The Source Arts Centre adopts a stance that all abuse against children is unacceptable.

1. All classes, tutorials, assessments, examinations should be as open as possible, and it is important that no more time should be spent alone with children than is necessary.
2. It is important not to have physical contact with children and this should be avoided.
3. It is not good practice to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
4. Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun as this could be misinterpreted.
5. It is important not to deter children from making a disclosure of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the Arts Centre’s procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.

6. Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
7. Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.
8. All children attending workshops/rehearsals etc. arranged and staffed by The Source Arts Centre will have to submit a parental/guardian consent form in advance. This will include an understanding that the Arts Centre is only responsible for the well being of the child during the duration of the activity and it is down to the parent/guardian to ensure that they are safely escorted to and from the premises punctually.
9. Emergency contact numbers for every child participating in Arts Centre arranged events will be obtained in advance and held by the event/project's most senior staff member.
10. All visiting companies will have the Child Protection Policy attached as a contractual appendix. Any third party company's carrying out work with children on behalf of The Source Arts Centre will have to be aware of and adhere to this document.
11. No photographs of children's events will be taken at The Source without prior written parental/guardian consent. Any photographs taken by The Source will be used for records and promotional purposes only.

#### **4. What we expect from children**

The Source Arts Centre has clear and bone fide expectations of the children in their care, and staff can expect:

- To be treated with mutual respect by all children in their care
- To be listened to with attention and responded to accordingly
- To work in an environment that is courteous, considerate and enjoyable
- To have meetings and events take place with committed attendance on schedule
- To have fruitful and constructive feedback after projects.

#### **5. Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)**

The Source Arts Centre has appointed a designated child protection person who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. This person is Eloise Gilsean, Marketing Officer, contactable by telephone on 0504 90340. If the (DCPP) can not be reached, contact the Artistic Director, Brendan Maher mobile 086 8872834

The role of the designated person(s) is to:

1. know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection concern happening;
2. provide information and advice on child protection to board members and staff of the Arts Centre;
3. ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover;
4. liaise with the Health Board and other agencies, as appropriate;
5. keep relevant people in the Arts Centre informed about any action taken and any further action required;
6. ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence;
7. advise the board of child protection needs; and liaise with the Health Board to review the operation of the Child Protection Policy regularly to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

## **6. Procedure for Reporting Concerns**

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:

- (i) specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
- (ii) an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behavior, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) an injury or behavior 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, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behavior;
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

- Suspicions
- Concerns
- Worrying observations
- Behavioural changes
- Actions and outcomes

If a member of staff has such observations they should be reported to the DCPD using the form available for this purpose. (See attachment)

All report records will be locked in the Artistic Directors' office and will only be accessible by the DCPD and Deputy DCPD. They will be dealt with in line with the company confidentiality policy.

Concerns about a specific child should be reported immediately by telephone to the DCPP and confirmed in writing within 24 hours using the form available from the DCPP. Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child. If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these should be reported by phone to the DCPP at the earliest opportunity.

The DCPP will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the Health Board), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

## **7. Dealing with a disclosure:**

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Find an early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible - note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person.

## **8. Reporting Procedure:**

- Any reports should be carried out using the appropriate form as detailed in staff training.
- 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.
- 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 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 (See confidentiality statement)
- 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. (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 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 on either 067 41934 or 0504 27604.
- In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive 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.

## **9. Confidentiality Statement:**

We in The Source Arts Centre are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk.
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.

- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances).
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people.
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

## **10. Recruitment and Selection Procedures**

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for staff in the context of child protection in line with recommendations by the Department of Health and Children have been adopted by The Source Arts Centre and include the following:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary).
- Posts will be advertised widely.
- We will endeavor to select the most suitably qualified personnel.
- Candidates for full and part-time positions 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 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 three month probationary period.
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought.

## **11. Staff management policy:**

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 organization'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 probationary or 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.

## **12. Involvement of primary carers:**

The Source is committed to an open policy with primary carers keeping them informed of all activities involving children in their care and our measures to ensure their protection.

All primary carers will be informed of the existence of our child protection policy at the time of confirming their children to activities in The Source.

All Primary Carers will be informed the nature of activities, start and finish time, child protection policy, any special dress requirements, other issues which may arise that concern their children.

Parental consent forms will be used when children are attending an activity at The Source, especially one where photographs and other visual recordings are taken of their children. Also where the children are to be taken off the premises it is necessary to get parental permission.

## **13. Dealing with allegations against staff:**

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person the DCPD will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Deputy DCPD will deal with issues related to the staff member.
  - The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk.
  - If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted.
  - The reporting procedures outlined above 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 of the nature of the allegation the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond.
  - The chairperson/head of the organization should be informed as soon as possible.
  - Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí.
  - After consultation, the chairperson/head of organization should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

**14. Complaints and comments procedure:**

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within 2 weeks.
- Eloise Gilsenan has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person. She can be contacted on 0504 90340. Depending on the nature of the complaint, she will either investigate the details by interviewing the appropriate staff or third party herself, or by enacting the appropriate procedure as described above.
- All complaints, both written and verbal, will be logged and responded to.

**15. Accident procedure:**

- The Source will maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organization.
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file.
- External organizations with whom The Source has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance
- First-aid boxes are available and regularly re-stocked.
- The first-aid boxes are located at the box office and in the green room.
- Availability of first-aid is in accordance with the organization's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of the accident/incident book is in the yellow folder at the box office.
- Children and young people will be advised of risks of dangerous material.
- Details of risky equipment used will be recorded and steps taken to minimize risk.
- Cognizance will be taken of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.

Adopted 2007

Reviewed: September 2016

Next Review: November 2018

Approved by :



\_\_\_\_\_  
Eloise Gilsenan



\_\_\_\_\_  
Brendan Maher

**Read & Agreed to :**

**Signed :** \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Appendix One

### **Definitions of Abuse**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through omission or failure to act to protect.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent ill- treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill- treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.



# the Source

arts centre thurles

## Incident report form

To: DCPD / Deputy DCPD (Please underline)

Date.....

Time.....

Who (list all involved).....  
.....  
.....

Nature of incident (Please state facts clearly and refrain from opinions)

Signed.....:

Date.....: