



CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Service excellence

This policy is underpinned by a commitment to service excellence which places children or vulnerable adults at the centre of activities which involve or impact upon them.

When communicating with parents/guardians, families, children and young people we are mindful of possible literacy issues, language barriers and communication differences.

In addition to the safeguarding policies and procedures laid out in this policy, we empower children and young people to claim their rights.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides all children and young people with a broad range of rights, including the right to be protected from abuse and neglect.

Under the UNCRC, which the Irish State ratified in 1992, children/young people have a right to express their views about matters that affect them and for those views to be heard and taken into account in all matters affecting them.

Siamsa Tíre empowers the children/young people with whom we work by making them aware of their rights and taking steps to ensure they can access those rights when interacting with us:

1. We encourage the active participation of children and young people in all decision making relevant to their involvement in the service/activities, in a manner which is appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
2. We promote a practice culture amongst workers and volunteers which enables and supports children/young people and vulnerable adults to exercise their right to speak out when they feel they are suffering harm or are at risk of suffering harm.
3. We ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults feel included in decision making, respected and valued by workers and volunteers, so that they are much more likely to speak up about any abuse they might be experiencing.
4. We recognise that enabling and promoting the participation of children, young people and vulnerable adults within our organisation has many benefits, including:
 - Providing us with the opportunity to check that what we are doing is actually what the target group want;
 - Demonstrating our commitment to upholding the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
 - Strengthening our commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in our organisation;
 - Building leadership skills of children and young people;
 - Enhancing the safety of children/young people and vulnerable adults by identifying risks and dangers.

Below are some examples of how we encourage and empower children and young people's participation in our organisation. For very young or certain groups of children we make extra effort to ensure that they understand the same messages.

- We educate children and young people on their right to be safe from abuse and neglect through, for example, discussion, leaflets and posters. This can help them to be active in their own protection.
- We educate children and young people about online safety and include a code of conduct for online safety in their code of behaviour.
- We make sure children and young people know who to speak to if they feel unsafe or unhappy about something.
- We consider how we involve children and young people and we support their participation.

- We train workers/volunteers in how to effectively listen to and communicate with children and young people.
- We openly discuss our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures with children and young people in the service.

Service excellence and complaints policy

We care deeply about our relationships with our audiences, artists, clients, collaborators and community members, be they interacting with us online or in person.

We actively solicit and welcome feedback from our community. We want to know what they think; whether it's praise for one of our events, suggestions on how we might improve on an aspect of our work, or if they felt we didn't get it right and they want to make a complaint.

Siamsa Tíre is committed to providing service excellence in all that we do, and we routinely evaluate our services in order to ensure this and to monitor and continuously improve our standards.

While service excellence is always our aim, we accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know, so that we can put things right and learn from our mistakes.

We welcome all comments on our services, positive or negative. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

Siamsa Tíre gives a commitment to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, sensitively and appropriately to ensure that the standard of service provided by Siamsa Tíre is maintained at a high level. The quality of the service provided to any child and family will never be adversely affected because a complaint has been made.

The complaints procedure is kept as simple as possible. Anyone making a complaint will be supported through the process as needed and given a copy of the 'Complaints Policy and Procedures'. The complaints policy and procedures are displayed in the rehearsal room on the notice board in the theatre.

When a complaint is received the manager will be informed immediately. Every effort will be made to address the issue informally before moving to a formal procedure.

If necessary, the complaint will be fully and appropriately investigated. A written acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint will usually be sent within 5 working days and a response within 30 days.

Where a complaint concerns a member of staff, we will address the situation with due regard to our obligations as an employer and the rights of the employees, the terms governing their conditions of employment and the procedures outlined in the staff handbook. For examples of other sources of information see:

- The National Employment Rights Agency: Workplace Solutions.
- Workplace Relations: Code of Practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

If a complaint is made against the CEO, a representative of the Board of Directors (usually the chairperson) will conduct an investigation and ensure appropriate management and recording of the complaint.

In the event of errors being made, Siamsa Tíre will endeavour to correct them as quickly as possible and to give an explanation and, where appropriate, an apology.

All complaints made – both formal and informal – will be recorded in detail. Records will be stored in the Complaints Records File and will be retained for at least two years following resolution of the complaint as required by regulation.

All information relating to any complaint will be treated as confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

The evaluation of the outcome of the complaint will form part of the considerations for future policy and practice and risk management procedures.

Please note, this policy relates only to those occasions when the complaint arises from a service standard perspective. In the case of a Child Protection concern the Child Safeguarding Policy will apply instead.

All records of complaints will be kept in full compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2014. The Complaints Records File will be available to those authorised to inspect it, including the Tusla Early Years Inspector.

How to make a complaint about service standards

A complaint can come to the attention of the service in a number of different ways:

- Contact, by phone or in person, with a staff member or by letter, email, and/or text.
- The complaint may be made by the person directly affected or by a person acting on their behalf.

We welcome feedback and complaints in whatever format the complainant is most comfortable with, as well as providing a formal [complaints submission form](#) which they can choose to complete. The form is available on our website and the link is provided to guardians.

It is not a requirement to complete this form to submit a complaint; the form is simply a useful mechanism to capture the maximum amount of information from the very beginning in order to progress resolution as swiftly as possible. If a complainant does not wish to complete the form, any member of staff will ensure that the information is captured in whatever way the complainant wants to provide it.

To whom a complaint can be made

If a person has a complaint about some aspect of the service's activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the individual concerned and/or to the designated person, Anne O'Donnell or deputy designated person Jonathan Kelliher.

Some complaints may fall more into the category of disagreements or differences of opinion and may be resolved through discussion and compromise on the part of both the person making the complaint and the staff member concerned.

How a complaint will be managed

Stage One: Informal Process

In the first instance, those who wish to make a complaint are encouraged to speak directly to the relevant member of staff. If they do not want to do this, they can speak with the designated person, Anne O'Donnell or deputy designated person Jonathan Kelliher, who will try to resolve the problem.

The details of the complaint and the response will be recorded by the designated person, Anne O'Donnell or deputy designated person Jonathan Kelliher.

If the designated person has a direct or indirect involvement in the matter being complained of, the complaint will be passed to Jonathan Kelliher (or, if necessary, another person who has had no involvement in the matter).

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage Two of the procedure will formally come into operation.

Stage Two: Formal Investigation

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, those making the complaint should be encouraged to put their complaint in writing to the Executive Director of Siamsa Tíre, Róisín McGarr, using the form attached to this policy. Relevant names, dates and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

The person making the complaint will be notified of the progress of an investigation on an ongoing and regular basis by the manager in writing, by email or letter.

The Executive Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing as soon as possible – usually within 5 working days – and will fully investigate the matter within 30 working days. If there is any delay, those who made the complaint will be advised of this and offered an explanation. The Executive Director of Siamsa Tíre will be responsible for sending them a full and formal written response to their complaint.

The Executive Director of Siamsa Tíre, with the assistance of appropriate staff members, will carry out a full investigation. This may involve:

- Interviews with all relevant individuals
- Minute taking of all meetings
- Individuals being informed that they may have an appropriate individual present with them during the investigation.

The Executive Director will also inform the chairperson of the board, that the investigation is taking place.

Where no grounds for the complaint are found, the person making the complaint will be notified and information detailing the next stage will be provided.

Where the Executive Director investigating, finds grounds for the complaint, they will ensure that all of the required details are available from the person making the complaint (using the Complaints Form).

Staff members must participate and support the investigation of any complaint, where requested. Any staff member involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.

Any complaints not within the scope of the service to investigate, will be referred appropriately. For example:

- If the Executive Director has good reason to believe that the situation has Child Protection implications, they must inform the designated Child Protection Officer, Anne O'Donnell and ensure that the local Tusla Duty Social Worker is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection Policy.
- If any person involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, they should contact An Garda Síochána.

Where a complaint relates to Health and Safety it may be appropriate to notify the Health and Safety Authority.

Stage 3: Communication of the Response/Outcome

The person making the complaint will be immediately informed of the outcome of the complaint once it has been completed.

The formal response to the complaint will be sent from the Executive Director, to the person who made the complaint and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate.

The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint and any necessary amendments to the service's policies and/or procedures and/or risk management procedures, arising from the investigation.

The Executive Director may arrange a time to meet the person who made the complaint and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and the response to it.

The Executive Director will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if separate meetings are more appropriate.

Stage 4: Review

If, at the conclusion of the above process, those who made a complaint are dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with the service's response will be passed to the chairperson of the Board of Directors, who will ensure that there is a complete review of the complaint. This review will be undertaken by a person not previously involved.

The chairperson will communicate a detailed response, including any actions to be taken, to both the Executive Director and the person who made the complaint, within 30 working days.

Recording of Complaints and Confidentiality

Records of complaints must be kept in the Complaints Records File, separate from children's files. All information relating to complaints is to be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Where a complaint involves a child protection concern, the Child Safeguarding Policy will apply instead.

Where a complaint involves an allegation of a breach of a person's rights (child or adult) and/or a criminal action or behaviour the appropriate authorities must be informed.

The record of the complaint must be kept for at least two years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

The record is to include:

- The name of the complainant
- The nature and details of the complaint
- The date and time the complaint was received
- The manner in which the complaint was received
- The name of the person who received the complaint
- The level of risk to the child or children arising from the subject of the complaint
- The manner in which the complaint was dealt with, including:
 - Any local resolution implemented
 - Any specific meetings held with the person making the complaint and minutes of any such meetings
 - Timelines for investigation of the complaint and notification of the outcome to the person making the complaint
- Details of the investigation carried out

- The outcome of the investigation
- Details of any corrective or preventive actions to resolve the complaint
- Information given to the person making the complaint about the progress and the outcome of the complaint
- of the investigation and whether the action taken to resolve the complaint was accepted
- Details of any plan implemented for the child's care as a result of the complaint as agreed with the child's parents/guardians
- Details of any review to the risk management process in light of the complaint.
- Details of any changes to practice or policy.

All records of complaints must be kept in full compliance with the [Child Care Act 1991\(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016](#), [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#).

Only members of staff authorised by the Executive Director can access the Complaints Records File.

Child Safeguarding

Definitions:

Legal Definition of a Child in Ireland

Under the Child Care Act 1991 a child is defined as "a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married".

The meaning of "harm", 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) sexual abuse of the child, -- Children First Act (page 6)

Definitions of Abuse: Neglect, Emotional, Physical and Sexual

Neglect: 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, medical care.

Emotional: When a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child.

Physical: A form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Sexual: When a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Types of abuse of children and vulnerable adults and how they may be recognised

Abuse of children or vulnerable adults can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

A child or vulnerable adult may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the victim, or a stranger and can be an adult or another child or vulnerable adult. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child or vulnerable adult, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both individuals and you should follow the protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child or vulnerable adult rather than the intention of the parent/ carer.

The definitions of neglect and abuse presented in this section are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

Neglect

Neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child or vulnerable adult does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the victim is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the victim's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child or vulnerable adult over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the victim once.

The following are features of neglect:

- Children or vulnerable adults being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child or vulnerable adult's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental
- Issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene

- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child or vulnerable adult. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child/ vulnerable adult are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child or vulnerable adult's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children or vulnerable adults are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their charges emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child or vulnerable adult's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child or vulnerable adult and their parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child or vulnerable adult depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child or vulnerable adult relative to his/her age and state of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child or vulnerable adult may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour. It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child or vulnerable adult where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child or vulnerable adult physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child or vulnerable adult's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling

- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defense of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defense could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defense of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or vulnerable adult is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child or vulnerable adult to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years.

Sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or vulnerable adult or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child or vulnerable adult
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child or vulnerable adult's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or vulnerable adult or the involvement of a child or vulnerable adult in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child or vulnerable adult, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child or vulnerable adult to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography (for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means)
 - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child or vulnerable adult to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children or vulnerable adults, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person or vulnerable adult may be sexual abuse even if the person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and at no stage should a child or vulnerable adult's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

Circumstances which may make children or vulnerable adults more vulnerable to harm

If you are dealing with children or vulnerable adults, you need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children or vulnerable adults that you come in contact with. A child or vulnerable adult needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children or vulnerable adults may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child or vulnerable adult may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children or vulnerable adults with disabilities, with communication difficulties, children or vulnerable adults in care or living away from home, or children or vulnerable adults with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following list is intended to help you identify the range of issues in a child or vulnerable adult's life that may place them at greater risk of abuse or neglect. It is important for you to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that a child or vulnerable adult in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

Parent or carer factors:

- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Addiction, including gambling
- Mental health issues
- Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability
- Conflictual relationships
- Domestic violence
- Adolescent parents

Child factors:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide
- Communication difficulties
- Trafficked/Exploited
- Previous abuse
- Young carer

Community factors:

- Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction
- Culture-specific practices, including:
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour-based violence
 - Radicalisation

Environmental factors:

- Housing issues
- Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently
- Poverty/Begging
- Bullying

- Internet and social media-related concerns

Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage:

- **Non-attendance at appointments**

- Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected
- Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change
- Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services
- Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans

You should consider these factors as part of being alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk of suffering abuse and in bringing reasonable concerns to the attention of Tusla.

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 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.

While bullying can happen to any child or vulnerable adult, some may be more vulnerable. These include: children or vulnerable adults with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children and those perceived to be LGBT; and children or vulnerable adults of minority religious faiths.

There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying among children or vulnerable adults with special educational needs. This is particularly so among those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some children or vulnerable adults with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such children or vulnerable adults may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognize and defend themselves against bullying behaviour.

Bullying in schools is a particular problem due to the fact that children spend a significant portion of their time there and are in large social groups. In the first instance, the school authorities are responsible for dealing with such bullying. School management boards must have a code of behaviour and an anti-bullying policy in place. If you are a staff member of a school, you should also be aware of your school's anti-bullying policy and of the relevant guidelines on how it is handled.

In cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, you may need to make a referral to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

Reasonable grounds for concern:

Reasonable grounds for concern include:

1. Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
2. Any concern about possible sexual abuse
3. Consistent signs that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
4. A child or vulnerable adult saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
5. Admission or indication by an adult or a child or vulnerable adult of an alleged abuse they committed
6. An account from a person who saw the child or vulnerable adult being abused.

Key safeguarding roles

Named Person:

This person is responsible for leading the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice.

Relevant Person:

Siamsa Tire ensures that a Relevant Person is appointed to act as first point of contact in relation to the Safeguarding Statement. The relevant person will be the most senior staff member in the organisation, i.e. the CEO.

Designated Liaison Person:

A Designated Liaison Person has been appointed by Siamsa Tire. The Designated Liaison Person acts as a resource to any young person, staff member and volunteer who have Child And Vulnerable Adult Protection concerns. All dealings of a Child or Vulnerable Adult Protection nature go through the Designated Liaison Person who in turn may make a referral to Tusla or the Gardaí. The designated liaison person is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed, so that welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.

Siamsa Tire will ensure that the Designated Liaison Person is knowledgeable about child or vulnerable adult protection and provided with any training considered necessary to fulfil this role.

Deputy Designated Liaison Person:

A Designated Liaison Person has been appointed by Siamsa Tire. In the event that the DLP is not available (e.g. due to annual leave, sick leave, etc.). The Deputy DLP is then delegated responsibility of DLP.

The Designated Liaison Person's role:

- Be fully familiar with Siamsa Tire's duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- Have good knowledge of our guiding principles and safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that the organisation's reporting procedure is followed, so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Receive child or vulnerable adult protection and welfare concerns from workers and volunteers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child or vulnerable adult protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of Siamsa Tire, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.
- Inform the victim's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless:
 - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child, young person or vulnerable adult;
 - Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
 - The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child or vulnerable adult abuse brought to your attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, as appropriate.

Any person who suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, or is at a risk of abuse, has responsibility to report their concerns to Tusla – The Child and Family Agency.

The Relevant Person for Child Protection at Siamsa Tíre Theatre & Arts Centre is Róisín McGarr. Contact 066 7123055

The Designated Liaison Person is Anne O'Donnell. Contact 066 7123055

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Jonathan Kelliher. Contact 066 7123055

Reporting procedure

Siamsa Tíre Theatre's Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection (DLP), and the Deputy (DDL), are to be contacted should you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child, young person or vulnerable adult's safety and welfare while at Siamsa Tíre Theatre or participating in any activities governed by Siamsa Tíre Theatre.

It is the responsibility of the Relevant Person, DLP and DDL to support and advise all our staff and contracted facilitators about our policy in regard to child protection.

It is the DLP and DDL's responsibility to ensure that procedures are followed as outlined in Siamsa Tíre Safeguarding Policy document and Safeguarding Statement.

It is the DLP and DDL's responsibility to liaise with Tusla – The Child and Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána where appropriate.

Any reasonable grounds for concern should be immediately reported to the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person; it is their role to contact Tusla – The Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána.

Dealing with an abuse disclosure:

**The initial response to an abuse disclosure is crucial.
It is important to be aware of your own emotional reaction.
Hearing a disclosure is likely to be distressing.**

THE ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO IS NOTHING.

Siamsa Tíre is aware that our cultural spaces are safe spaces for children, young people and or vulnerable adults and they may feel more comfortable talking about any concerns and difficulties in their lives than in other settings. A child or vulnerable adult may disclose an abuse/abuses perpetrated against him/her. It is essential that they feel supported in what may be an extremely traumatic experience for them. The act of disclosing is a huge act of trust and must be treated with respect, sensitivity and care. All those who have contact with children and vulnerable adults through their roles in Siamsa Tíre should be aware of the possibility of receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or or vulnerable adult and familiarise themselves with the advice below.

The following advice on handling a disclosure of abuse is adapted from Code of Good Practice – Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (2003):

- React calmly, as over-reacting may alarm the affected person and compound feelings of anxiety and guilt
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the person seriously
- Reassure the person that they have taken the right action in telling
- Do not make false promises, particularly regarding secrecy
- Do not ask the person to repeat the story unnecessarily
- Ask questions only for the purpose of clarification. Be supportive, but do not ask leading questions or seek intimate details beyond those volunteered by the child or vulnerable adult. Detailed investigative interviews will, if necessary, be carried out by Child and Family Agency Staff member or members of the Garda Síochána
- Check with the person to ensure that what has been heard and understood by you is accurate.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Record the conversation as soon as possible in as much detail as possible.
- Sign and date the record
- Explain and ensure that the person understands the procedures which will follow
- Pass the information to the Designated Person, who will follow reporting procedures.
- Treat the information confidentially, sharing it only with persons who have a right to hear it i.e. on a 'need to know' basis only

Who to report to at Siamsa Tíre

- Inform the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Anne O'Donnell/ Jonathan Kelliher) of all details including the date, time and people involved and the facts. Ensure that details recorded are as you have outlined them to the DLP/ DDLP. Any opinions should be supported by facts.
- The DP/ DDLP will discuss the concerns with primary carers of the child, young person or vulnerable adult involved. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to Tusla unless it is likely to put the child or vulnerable adult at further risk.
- The DLP/ DDLP may contact Tusla's social worker for an informal consultation prior to making a report.
- Information shared will be strictly on a "need to know" basis (see our confidentiality policy).
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern, the DLP/ DDLP will contact the duty social worker for our area using the standard reporting Tusla form without delay.
- If the DLP or DDLP is not available, contact the local duty social worker of Tusla directly. Contact information is included with this policy.

- In case of emergencies outside of Tusla's social work department hours, contact the Gardai. In situations where the immediate safety of a child or young person is threatened, it may be necessary for the DLP, DDLP or the person reporting concerns to immediately contact the Gardai.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017) recommend that the following procedure is followed where reasonable grounds exist for the reporting of suspected or actual child abuse.

This forms the basis of Siamsa Tíre's policy for reporting:

- A report (informal or formal) can be made to Tusla in person, by telephone, in writing to the local social work duty service (9am – 5pm) or by the Tusla Web portal <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/> (Mon – Fri 9am-5pm). The Tusla Portal allows users to securely submit Child Protection and Welfare Report Forms (CPWRFs) and Retrospective Abuse Report Forms (RARFs) to Tusla online. To use the Tusla Portal, you will first need to create a user account. After you complete and submit your Report on the Tusla Portal you can then print a copy for your own records. Reports must be made using the Tusla reporting form. Each region has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns. Contact information for the nearest officers is retained at Siamsa Tíre and available within this Policy Document.
- The DLP/DDLP who has been approached with concerns or allegations of child abuse, or who has concerns regarding a child at Siamsa Tíre, will make personal contact with the duty social worker. They will facilitate the social worker in gathering as much information as possible about the child and his or her situation. It is likely that the social worker will wish to speak to the person who first witnessed the incident, received the disclosure, or felt the concern. The DLP/DDLP will assist with making contact as required.
- In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of Tusla staff; the report will be made to An Garda Síochána.
- Under no circumstances will a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending the intervention of the authorities.
- According to guidelines any professional who suspects child abuse should inform the family if a report is likely to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child. Co-operation with the family is essential in order to ensure the safety of the child. DP/DDP will strike a balance between showing respect for families and using authority appropriately.

How to Report Your Concerns or a Disclosure:

To help Tusla staff assess your reasonable concern they need as much information as possible about the child or vulnerable adult and his/her home circumstances and the grounds for concern. A confidential report should be given to the DLP/DDLP and could include:

- The child or vulnerable adult's name, address and age
- Names and addresses of parents or guardians
- Names, if known, of who is allegedly harming the child or vulnerable adult or not caring for them appropriately
- A detailed account of your grounds for concern (e.g. details of the allegation, dates of incidents, and descriptions of injuries)
- Names of other children or vulnerable adults in the household
- Name of school the child attends
- Your name, contact details and relationship to the child or vulnerable adult

While it is possible to report a concern without giving your name, it may make it difficult for Tusla to access your concern.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report abuse 'reasonably and in good faith to Tusla or An Garda Síochána'. This means that, even if the reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

What will happen after a report is made?

If you make a report about a child or vulnerable adult, Tusla will normally acknowledge it, and may contact you for further information, if necessary. It is understandable that you would like to be assured that the matter is being followed up. However, to protect the privacy of the child and family, it may not be possible for Tusla to inform you of the progress or outcome of Tusla's contact with the child or family, unless you are involved in discussions around family support or child protection plans. If you continue to have concerns about the child, or if additional information comes to light, you should contact Tusla.

Role of Siamsa Tíre after a report is made

Siamsa Tíre's Designated Liaison Person/ DDLP, and if appropriate the staff member to whom the disclosure was made, will continue to be available to support the affected person. We will encourage and support them in maintaining their involvement with the organisation. Siamsa Tíre is aware that there are organisations that have specific expertise on welfare and child protection and the DLP may decide to contact one or more of these organisations for advice. We are also aware that there may be circumstances when it is more appropriate to refer a young person to an organisation with specific expertise. (For a List of National Support Organisations See Appendix Fourteen)
If there is any doubt about the best way to support the affected person, Siamsa Tíre's Designated Liaison Person will contact Tusla for advice.

Dealing with a retrospective allegation

The term retrospective abuse refers to abuse that an adult discloses that took place during their childhood. A Retrospective Abuse Report Form can be downloaded from the Tusla website and the link is available in the Appendices of this document. The DLP/ DDLP can, if required, support the individual to make this report. In cases of retrospective abuse, a report needs to be made, where there is a current or potential future risk to children from the person against whom there is an allegation. In this instance, the DLP should follow Standard Reporting Procedures as set out in this document.

The National Counselling Service is in place to listen to, value and understand those who have been abused in childhood. The service is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service and is available free of charge in all regions of the country ([see http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/National_Counselling_Service/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/National_Counselling_Service/)). The service can be accessed either through healthcare professionals or by way of self-referral.

Staff Allegations Procedure

If allegations of abuse are made against employees, it is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child or vulnerable adult
- The procedure for dealing with the employee

In general, it is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues, therefore:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Siamsa Tíre: 066 7123055

The mandated and Relevant Person for Child And Vulnerable Adult Protection at Siamsa Tíre Theatre is Róisín McGarr.

Contact 066 7123055

The designated Person is Anne O'Donnell. Contact 066 7123055.

The Deputy Designated Person is Jonathan Kelliher. Contact 066 7123055.

Kerry Dedicated Contact Point to report a concern about a child or need to discuss a concern is;

Child and Family Agency

Rathass

Tralee

Co Kerry

V92 YA25

Contact; 066 7184501 (9am – 5pm)

Concerns in relation to children out of hours should be reported immediately to **An Garda Siochana, Tralee, Contact 066 7102300.**

The Chairperson of the Board has ultimate responsibility for any issues relating to allegations of child abuse made against members of staff and the matter will be escalated to the Board for their attention. In the event of their unavailability or where appropriate, the other Board members will be deemed to have responsibility in dealing with any such issues involving Siamsa Tíre Theatre staff members. Contact for all Board members is available at Siamsa Tíre Theatre.

Staff/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegations of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff including counselling where necessary. However, the primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

Agreed procedures to address situations where allegations of child abuse are made against an employee:

1. Senior management will inform the employee that an allegation has been made against him/her.
2. Senior management will inform the employee of the nature of the allegation.
3. The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond. The employer should note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to Tusla.
4. Senior management will follow the standard procedure for reporting allegations to Tusla without delay.
5. The chairperson will be informed as soon as possible.

6. Action should be guided by the agreed procedures stated in the Safeguarding Policy document, by referral to Tusla guidance, and the applicable employment contract.
7. The first priority will be to ensure that no child or vulnerable adult is exposed to unnecessary risk. Senior management will as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures will be proportionate to the level of risk and will not unreasonably penalise the employee, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children or vulnerable adults. Where protective measures do penalize the employee, early consideration will be given to the case.
8. Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee will be taken in consultation with Tusla and An Garda Síochána. Senior management will maintain a close liaison with these authorities to achieve this.
9. After these consultations referred to above and when pursuing the question of the future position of the employee, senior management will advise the person accused of the allegation and the agreed procedures will be followed.
10. Children, or vulnerable adults and/or their primary caregivers will be informed by management or the board of any allegations made against Siamsa Tíre staff concerning them, so long as it is in accordance with our Child Safeguarding Policy guidelines for reporting and confidentiality and taking into consideration the age of the child and any spec

Procedure to be followed where an allegation is made against another child, young person or vulnerable adult:

If an allegation is made against another child, young person or vulnerable adult, it should be considered a protection issue for both involved and protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The parents/guardians of the individuals concerned should be informed immediately. Advice should be taken from the Statutory Authorities as to how this might best be done. Decisions regarding the future participation of the person alleged to have committed abuse should be made at management level and with advice from an organisation/individual with expertise in the area.

Codes of Behaviour

To ensure we work safely with children, young people and vulnerable adults, Siamsa Tire has developed the following Codes of Behaviour for all staff/volunteers who work with the target groups as well as the young people themselves:

Code of Behaviour – Adults

For staff/volunteers, contracted facilitators and visiting groups working with vulnerable adults or persons under 18 years old in Siamsa Tire (regardless of whether the interaction is in person, online or otherwise):

1. All adults working with children and young or vulnerable people must have read and understood Siamsa Tire's Child Safeguarding Policy.
2. Be child centered: create an environment in which children are listened to, valued, encouraged and affirmed, have their rights respected and are treated as individuals.
3. Involve children in decision-making, as appropriate.
4. Always seek the child or vulnerable adult's permission before engaging in work that requires touch. Be mindful of physical boundaries that should be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child.
5. Adopt the safest possible practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children or vulnerable adults and protect yourself from the risk of accusations of abuse or neglect.
6. Report and record all accidents on an Incident Report Form.
7. Report and record all concerns, disclosures and complaints on an Incident Report Form and give it to the Designated Liaison Person immediately.
8. Be open with parents/ guardians and consult with them about everything that concerns their children/ vulnerable adults.
9. Don't spend excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others.
10. Ensure adequate adult supervision and accompaniment of children. Siamsa Tire requests that one adult supervisor be present for every ten children. These supervisors should be in addition to any adult performers.
11. On occasion, one to one tutoring may occur. Parents/ guardians will be made aware when and if this is the case and are welcome to wait in the theatre for the duration of tuition.
12. Don't take children alone in a car journey, however short, or alone to your home.
13. Never engage in sexually provocative games, allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
14. Never make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or vulnerable adult.
15. Never tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children or vulnerable adult.
16. Never do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves.
17. Never let allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult go uninvestigated or unrecorded.

I have read and understood the above Child Safeguarding Code of Behaviour and I undertake to follow this Code while engaged with Siamsa Tire. I will also read Siamsa Tire's Safeguarding Policy available for download from <https://www.siamsatire.com/about/child-protection-policy>

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Code of Behaviour - Children and Young People

For children and young people attending or participating classes, workshops, activities and events in Siamsa Tíre regardless of whether the interaction is in person or on-line.

1. Staff/volunteers, facilitators and visitors are treated with dignity and respect.
2. Treat Siamsa Tíre Theatre property both inside and out with respect. Any damage to property will be brought to the attention of a member of staff or adult.
3. Children will value, encourage and respect the rights of other children taking part in activities.
4. Everyone will respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
5. Any bullying, threatening, violent or degrading behaviour towards other children or adults will be reported to the Designated Person and parents.
6. All participants will be sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs.
7. Report cases of bullying to either the designated person, facilitator or a staff member of their choice.
8. Avoid prejudice and encourage respect for difference in relation to religion, race, class, gender or ability.
9. Avoid using inappropriate language and swear words.
10. Respect another child's body as their own property.
11. Help other children to be safe, happy, learn and have as much fun as possible.
12. On occasion, one to one tutoring may occur. Parents/ guardians will be made aware when and if this is the case and are welcome to wait in the theatre for the duration of tuition.

I have read and understood the above Child Safeguarding Code of Behaviour and I undertake to follow this Code while engaged with Siamsa Tíre. I will also read Siamsa Tíre's Child Safeguarding Policy available for download from

<https://www.siamsatire.com/about/child-protection-policy>

Signed: _____ Dated: _____



Declaration Form
Confidential

Declaration form for all those working with children and young people.

Surname_____ First Name_____

Date of Birth_____ Place of Birth_____

Address:_____

Tel. No._____ Mobile No._____

Any other name(s) previously known as_____

Email:_____

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people? ☐

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes can you outline the reason below;

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes please state below the nature and the date(s) of the offence(s)

Signed_____ Date:_____

Signed_____ Date:_____
(Senior Manager at Siamsa Tíre)

Accidents Procedure

Good practices in Siamsa Tíre to keep children or vulnerable adults and staff safe.

If an accident occurs always:

- Stay calm, listen and act quickly
- Seek medical attention immediately if required.
- Record the accident in the Incident Report Form.
- Inform the parents and Designated Person.

Know the location of our First Aid box (Box Office, backstage and rehearsal room)**Good Practices to avoid or monitor accidents****Know the children:**

- We have defined codes of behaviour for children, adults, young people.
- We have a registration system for each child.
- We keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs and emergency contact telephone numbers.

Keep records of:

- Attendance
- Accidents - accident records should be reviewed regularly, and any unusual patterns reported to senior management
- Consents given for various activities
- Any complaints or grievances

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- Any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards
- There is sufficient heating and ventilation
- Toilets, showers areas and washing facilities are up to standard
- Fire precautions are in place
- First aid facilities and equipment are adequate
- There is access to a phone - emergency numbers are displayed in the lobby
- Equipment is checked regularly
- Insurance cover is adequate

It is important to ensure that:

- Children or vulnerable adults are not left unattended
- Adequate numbers of workers of both sexes are available to supervise the activities
- Workers know at all times where children or vulnerable adult are and what they are doing
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision
- Dangerous behaviour is not allowed

Discipline and challenging behaviour:

- More than one person should be present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
- A record is kept in the Incident Book describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property and how the situation was resolved

Provide training, including:

- Induction training for all staff
- Particular skills training to fit in with the nature of the organization
- Safeguarding training to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse

Supervising workers:

- Focus on the work to be done, always acknowledging the positive tasks that have already been carried out
- Provide opportunities for discussing concerns and training needs
- Hold a review at the end of the trial period to confirm the workers in post, to extend his/her probation period or to determine his/her services
- Have an annual review or staff appraisal to assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that you need to make.

Ratios

While Siamsa Tire recognises that different groups and situations, will require different levels of supervision, we do subscribe to the following key principles that are recommended as good practice in the youth work sector:

- Child Protection for The Youth Work Sector (2003): The minimum adult/young person ratio should ideally be one adult per group of eight plus one other adult on "site", and allowing an additional adult for each group of ten thereafter. Local circumstances, the ages of the children, the experience of the volunteers and the staff should be taken into consideration.
- When planning activities/events, one of the considerations is the most appropriate adult/young person ratio.
- Siamsa Tire takes all reasonable measures to ensure that the gender of the staff/volunteers reflects the gender of the group

Confidentiality Statement

We at Siamsa Tíre recognise the need for confidentiality in all matters regarding safeguarding and will at all times adhere to the guidelines laid out in both our own Safeguarding Policy and that of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Confidentiality Policy for Staff, Tutors, Volunteers, Youth Facilitators and Group Leaders:

- "Need to know" basis - any information provided to Tusla and An Garda Síochána will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving such information will only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate "need to know" basis.
- Primary carers, children, young people or vulnerable adults have a right to know if personal information is being shared with Tusla, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.
- Images of any child, young person or vulnerable adults participating in activities organised by Siamsa Tíre Theatre will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/caregiver. Consent will be sought for photographs, video footage, including posters, flyers and / or newspapers to be used publicly or for social media publicity purposes.
- Records and information are kept in a safe and confidential manner. Access to Siamsa Tíre Incident Report Form is through Siamsa Tíre Theatre staff only, under the authorisation of the Relevant Person, DLP and DDLP, and is not accessible to the general public. Information about health issues and special needs of children participating in any youth programme at Siamsa Tíre Theatre are also confidential. Staff and facilitators have access to these records under the authorisation of Anne O'Donnell (Designated Liaison Person) only, however staff on duty during classes, and facilitator(s), can and must access this information as appropriate. All staff and facilitators abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy guidelines of Siamsa Tíre Theatre including this confidentiality policy.

Staff Procedures

Recruitment Procedures

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures and involves:

- Always applying thorough selection procedures, no matter who the applicant happens to be;
- 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; and
- Providing training.

Process to follow when recruiting workers:

1. **Clear definition of the role of the employee:** clarify and agree expectations regarding the role, identify the minimum level of personal qualities and skills required to fill the post.
2. **Application:** Siamsa Tíre & Arts Centre will collect a CV and all relevant information about the applicant, including past experience of working with children.
3. **Declaration:** all applicants will be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with children and young people, and declaring any past criminal convictions or cases pending against them. It is the policy of Siamsa Tíre Theatre to exclude applicants who would be deemed "a risk" to children. Some reasons for exclusion could include any child-related convictions, a refusal to comply with recruitment procedures and paperwork requirements, insufficient documentation or references, or concealing any information regarding the applicant's suitability to working with children.
4. **Interview:** all applicants will be interviewed by at least two representatives of Siamsa Tíre. Interviewers assess the applicant's suitability for the post. The information supplied by the applicant and any other information supplied on their behalf will only be seen by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.
5. **References:** an applicant will be expected to supply a CV and the names of two referees (not family members) who will testify as to their character, suitability to the role of employee, or any other issues which may affect their ability to perform the tasks required of them. At least one referee should have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. All references will be received in writing and later confirmed by telephone, letter or personal visit.
6. **Identification:** the identity of the applicant must be confirmed against some documentation (ID card, driving license, passport or long birth certificate) and proof of address which gives his/her full name and address together with a signature and photograph. This will be compared with the written application.
7. **Garda Clearance:** candidates must consent to Garda vetting, and Garda Clearance will be verified by Siamsa Tíre Theatre DP/DDP before employment is confirmed.

GARDA VETTING

Garda vetting is provided in Ireland by the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) of An Garda Síochána. Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 a person,

company, organisation or group providing relevant services to children or vulnerable persons must have vetting in place for any person they employ, contract or permit to undertake 'relevant work and activities'. This is where 'a necessary and regular part consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons'. It includes full-time, part-time, voluntary work and student placements. Vetting under the Act can only be conducted in respect of such persons and activities.

Create is registered with the National Vetting Bureau to represent other persons, organisations and groups in accessing vetting for bona-fide reasons of employment or engagement in relevant work or activities in the arts and culture. Since 2007, we have provided access to vetting for a large number of organisations including arts centres, commissioners, production companies, arts events and festivals, film-makers, community cultural groups, creative activities, and individual artists and freelance arts practitioners.

To process vetting through Create, you must be affiliated to the vetting service. Create provides access to the national online e-Vetting system, which means speedy processing of applications, where individuals can track the progress of their application online.

Under the **Children First Act 2015**, a provider of relevant services to children is required to complete a Child Safeguarding Statement and must appoint a designated person as the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

In accessing vetting, affiliates authorise An Garda to process sensitive personal data through Create. We are committed to safeguarding the privacy rights of affiliates and vetting applicants. All personal information in our care is treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, in accordance with data protection law and regulation.

Update January 2020: – GNVB Registration Requirements

As of 1 January 2020 all **new employers** (excluding self-employed artists) wishing to use Create's Vetting for the Arts Service to access Garda vetting must contact the Garda National Vetting Bureau in the first instance to establish if they are undertaking relevant work. Please note that **self-employed artists** should contact Create's vetting service directly and do not need a Garda National Vetting Bureau reference number.

If your service is approved by the National Vetting Bureau they will give you a reference number. Create will be unable to process vetting applications for new employers without this number. If you are not already affiliated to Create, please contact us to find out if we can help you or your organisation to access vetting, after receiving your registration number from the Vetting Bureau. To contact the Garda National Vetting Bureau – Phone 1890 488488 or Email: vettinglat@garda.ie The National Vetting Bureau accepts that face-to-face ID checks, while still the preferred option for verifying ID details, it does represent a health risk. In order to manage the risk, affiliates can take a more flexible approach to identity, cognisant of the risk created by a less stringent identity process.

For the duration, the affiliate can establish identity without a face-to-face meeting through methods such as accepting scanned/photographed documents. If you choose to accept scanned documents, once you have received a scanned copy of the NVB1 form/signature you can forward it by email to vetting@create-ireland.ie for processing.

The documentation scanned or emailed to you must be of a good, clear quality. Once normal activities resume, **it is your responsibility to verify and check the applicant's original documentation against the scanned documentation** to ensure it matches the information on the consent form.

<https://www.create-ireland.ie/supports/vetting/>

Successful Applicants/ Managing and Supervising Staff

When a successful candidate takes up a post at Siamsa Tíre Theatre working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults or when a new staff member is recruited, the following procedures shall be followed:

Induction: When an applicant is accepted, they will be required to undertake an induction. Induction will be a planned programme that enables workers to get to know Siamsa Tíre Theatre, their colleagues and their job. It will also cover expectations, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances and allegations, and will include a detailed discussion of Siamsa Tíre Theatre Safeguarding Policy including the role of the Designated Person and Deputy for Child Protection, reporting procedures, and codes of behaviour.

Child Safeguarding Policy: Executive Director, Róisín McGarr (Relevant Person) will discuss with new staff their role(s) in terms of children, young people or vulnerable adult's programming and activities at Siamsa Tíre Theatre, and any aspects of the policy that are unclear to new staff will be explained during induction sessions. All staff and contracted facilitators will be provided with a copy of Siamsa Tíre Theatre's Safeguarding Policy during induction and will be expected to confirm in writing that they have read and understood, and agree to abide by, this policy in all areas.

Child Safeguarding Training: DLP will undertake to participate in training in Safeguarding provided by the Arts Council, Tusla or others, as required to ensure best practice and procedures are maintained and updated on an ongoing basis. All staff and contracted facilitators will be updated on any changes to the child safeguarding policies and procedures and kept informed of important information and reporting procedures.

Trial Period: Appointment will be conditional on the successful completion of a trial period, the length of which will be decided at the outset. This gives an opportunity to assess the suitability of a new worker to work with children or vulnerable adults and his/her commitment to Siamsa Tíre Theatre policies on safe practices.

Records: Details of selection and induction will be recorded, along with notes on any matters arising during any part of the process.

Additional Training: To maintain quality standards and good practice, training will be encouraged on an ongoing basis for all workers.

Staff Meetings: Will be held on an ongoing basis to ensure clear communication between all staff and facilitators working with children, young people or vulnerable adults at Siamsa Tíre Theatre, to allow for any grievances or concerns, or lack of clarity on policy or procedures, to be aired and worked out, and to ensure the environment for children, young people or vulnerable adults remains safe and monitored at all times.

Annual Review: To assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that needs to be made, staff and facilitators will be supervised and receive annual reviews of their work practices.

Factors that would exclude a person from working or volunteering with Siamsa

IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION

Offences that will automatically disqualify an individual from employment with Siamsa Tíre are:

- a) Any offence of a sexual nature
- b) Any offence against a child or of child abuse or child abuse images
- c) Any charge brought concerning abuse of a child or vulnerable person
- d) A series of continuous offending that might cause concern for the well-being of children or vulnerable adults
- e) An offence that causes grievous bodily harm
- f) Any offence of murder or manslaughter
- g) An offence of kidnapping

Involvement of Primary Carers

It is the policy of Siamsa Tíre Theatre to be open with and respectful of all parents and other primary carers of children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in activities at our theatre.

We do this by:

1. Ensuring that all primary carers are aware of our Safeguarding Policy (a copy is available at the box office of Siamsa Tíre Theatre and on our website).
2. Communicating relevant and appropriate information to parents/guardians and children/young people to enhance working in partnership.
3. Making sure primary carers are informed of our current and potential activities for children and young people including content, schedules, adult supervision and age-appropriateness of the activities.
4. Providing appropriate consent forms, collecting signatures, and gathering necessary information from caregivers prior to engaging children in any activities.
5. Complying with health and safety practices (a copy of Siamsa Tíre Theatre Health and Safety Statement is available to all caregivers on our website or at box office).
6. Reviewing and if necessary, updating our Safeguarding Policy on a regular basis.
7. Adhering to stringent recruitment guidelines on staff hiring and contracting youth-work facilitators and ensuring staff and people working with young people and children are properly vetted, trained and supervised.
8. Encouraging the involvement of parents and caregivers in activities for children, young people or vulnerable adults when possible.
9. Creating an organizational culture that empowers children, young people and vulnerable adults to claim their right to be protected, consulted, listened to and treated with respect appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
10. Developing an anti-bullying policy that is shared with children and their primary carers.
11. Informing children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents and guardians of how to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service being provided.
12. Ensuring that children, young people and vulnerable adults know how to raise concerns if they are unhappy or feel unsafe.

If any caregiver has concerns about the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults in the context of activities organised by Siamsa Tíre Theatre, we undertake to:

1. Listen to any concerns brought to the attention of the Training & Development Officer Anne O' Donnell (DLP) and act according to our Safeguarding Policy
2. Respond to the needs of children and young people, and act according to Safeguarding Policy
3. When obliged to, we will pass on any child or vulnerable adult safety concerns to the authorities (An Garda Síochána and/or Tusla) in cases where concerns have been expressed regarding the welfare or safety of any child or vulnerable adult participating in activities under the auspices of Siamsa Tíre Theatre
4. In the event of a complaint against any member of staff or an external facilitator contracted by Siamsa Tíre Theatre, we will immediately follow Safeguarding Policy

procedures to ensure the safety of the child/young person or vulnerable adult, and inform primary carers as appropriate

It is the policy of Siamsa Tíre Theatre to make sure that Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults are protected and kept safe from harm and abuse while they are with staff/volunteers and outside facilitators/groups in our theatre.

To that end we will:

1. Act on any child protection/welfare concern by contacting Tusla or Gardai when necessary and in accordance with our policy guidelines
2. Encourage primary caregivers to be familiar with our policy guidelines, and work with us to ensure the safety of every child or vulnerable adult participating in our youth programmes and activities.
3. Make sure caregivers are provided with the appropriate forms to ensure the children/young people or vulnerable adults in their care are properly covered for participation in activities at Siamsa Tíre Theatre
4. Make known the contact person(s) for Safeguarding at Siamsa Tíre Theatre (this information is on display in the, rehearsal room and backstage and ensure their availability to caregivers.

Protection Records

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance to staff on record keeping, to enable the designated member of staff with a responsibility for protection to ensure that all protection information and concerns are kept in an appropriate and useful manner.

Good record keeping is essential in safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. For this reason, it is advisable to carry out a regular audit of all protection information kept in the organisation, to ensure that procedures are being followed correctly.

What kind of information should be recorded?

Any member of staff who has a concern about a child or vulnerable adult should make a written note. This must be passed on to the Designated Liaison Person, (although a personal copy may be kept in a secure place). The note should be timed, dated and signed, with your name printed alongside the signature.

Notes must be made as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours of the incident giving rise to the concern. The important thing is that they are:

- Factual
- Using a child or vulnerable adult's own words where possible
- A record of what you saw and heard

Professional opinions are acceptable but only if you state the facts or observations upon which your opinion is based.

If a referral is made to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardaí a written record of all concerns held should be sent and a copy of the referral should be kept by the theatre.

Nagging Doubts about a Person's Safety and Welfare

Sometimes, things which seem to be insignificant or trivial at the time turn out to be vital pieces of information later.

A record should be made of any information, including hearsay and 'nagging doubts', which give you cause for concern about a child or vulnerable adult. Much of this information may not appear to be very significant on its own, but it could contribute to a 'jigsaw' picture of abuse that should not be ignored. Remember no concern is too small.

If there has been no specific incident or information, make a written note. Try to identify what is really making you feel worried. Record these concerns on the same record of concern form for your records.

It is crucial that actions and outcomes are recorded on these forms, including any consultation that has been carried out with any other professionals.

How should notes and reports be made?

It is impossible to say, at the time of making a protection note, who will eventually have access to it, or when. It may be consulted months or even years after it was written. Always bear in mind that someone who is a complete stranger to you and the organization may need to read your record at some stage in the future.

Ideally, logs of incidents should be typed. If handwritten, notes should be clearly legible and written in ink. All notes and reports must contain the following:

- Date of the incident
- Date and time of the record being made
- Name and date of birth of the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) concerned
- A factual account of what happened, and the location where the incident took place (keeping it in the Date and time of the record being made
- Name and date of birth of the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) concerned
- A factual account of what happened, and the location where the incident took place (keeping it in the child or vulnerable adult's words)
- A note of any other people involved e.g. as witnesses
- Questions that the adult asked (remember do not ask leading questions)
- Action taken, and any future plans e.g. monitor and review
- Any other agencies informed:
 - o Names,
 - o Dates,
 - o Times of anyone spoken to.
- Printed name of the person making the record
- Job title of the person making the record
- Signature (print name alongside)

The source of the information should be identified e.g. 'Mrs Bell, a facilitator, informed me that...' Or 'I saw John in the gallery at break time....'

Information should be factual or based on fact. Record what you saw, heard etc. and try not to be vague or woolly (e.g. 'Jenny was crying and rocking' rather than 'Jenny was upset')

Opinion is acceptable provided that you can give some justification for holding it (e.g. 'Sam ran and hid under the table when his mother arrived to take him home and clung to me when I tried to get him out. He appeared to be frightened.')

Make a note of what you have done with the information (e.g. 'I consulted the Executive Director, Miss Wilson, and she said she would...')

Try to avoid specialist jargon which someone external to the organisation would not necessarily understand, write the information in full.

Where should protection information be kept?

The protection file should contain all reports, notes and correspondence referring to a child or vulnerable adult. This should be kept in one secure place e.g. a locked filing cabinet in the Designated Liaison Person's office.

Who should have access to child protection information?

Access to the information on file should be on a need-to-know basis among the staff. This can only be decided on a case-by-case basis. The confidentiality of the child or vulnerable adult and family should be respected as far as possible, but the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount. It would be unlikely that every member of staff would need to know the details of a case. Generally speaking, the closer the contact with the child or vulnerable adult, the more likely the need to know an outline of the case. All information must be shared with Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardaí, as appropriate, where there is concern that a child is at risk of significant harm.

Protection information should not ordinarily be shared with agencies other than these statutory agencies e.g. information should not be released to solicitors etc.

How long should information be kept?

The file should be retained at the theatre until the child's date of birth + 25 years.

Information of a protection nature relating to an allegation against a member of staff, including where the allegation is unfounded, should be kept until the person's normal retirement age or 10 years from the date of the allegation if that's longer.

Setting:

Date:

Time:

Staff member's name:

Staff member's role:

Child's / or vulnerable adult's name:

Child's / or vulnerable adult's Date of Birth:

Child's / or vulnerable adult's School:

Child's / or vulnerable adult's Parent's Names and Address(es)

Sibling's names (if any)

Concern

What prompted this record? (Please include dates, times, incidents, behaviours, **what the child or vulnerable adult said, in their words**)

Remember **to record any questions** that you asked (do not ask leading questions, if you need more fact or detail think of T.E.D "Tell me....." "Explain to me....." "Describe to me.....")

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM/ RECORD OF CONCERN

Does the concern fall into one of the following categories? Please tick.

Neglect	[]	Sexual Abuse	[]	Physical Abuse	[]
Emotional Abuse	[]	CSE	[]	Honour based violence	[]
FGM	[]	Forced marriage	[]	Online/sexting	[]
Peer on peer	[]	Radicalisation	[]	Domestic abuse	[]
Other	[]				

PRINT _____	PRINT _____
(Member of staff)	(Designated member of staff for children protection)

SIGNED _____	SIGNED _____
(Member of staff)	(Designated member of staff for children protection)

Has this information been discussed/ passed to any other agencies? (Please give details) If not, please record reasons why:

Actions by designated lead:

Outcome:

Chronology for investigation of incident or concern to be filled by DP

[illegible]

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that relate to child welfare and protection. The information here gives a brief overview of relevant legislation. It is not intended as legal opinion or advice and, if in doubt, you should consult the original legislation.

CHILD CARE ACT 1991

This is the key piece of legislation which regulates childcare policy in Ireland. Under this Act, Tusla has a statutory responsibility to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. If it is found that a child is not receiving adequate care and protection, Tusla has a duty to take appropriate action to promote the welfare of the child. This may include supporting families in need of assistance in providing care and protection to their children. The Child Care Act also sets out the statutory framework for taking children into care, if necessary.

PROTECTIONS FOR PERSONS REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ACT 1998 (updated 2015)

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardaí as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the HSE who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency (www.tusla.ie and www.hse.ie).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 2006 (updated 2019)

Section 176 of this Act created an offence of reckless endangerment of children. This offence may be committed by a person who has authority or control over a child or abuser who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

1. Causing or permitting the child to be placed or left in a situation that creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse; or
2. Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE (WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION ON OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACT 2012

Under this Act, it is a criminal offence to withhold information about a serious offence, including a sexual offence, against a person under 18 years or a vulnerable person. The offence arises where a person knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person and he or she has information which would help arrest, prosecute or convict another person for that offence, but fails without

reasonable excuse to disclose that information, as soon as it is practicable to do so, to a member of An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Withholding legislation are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015.

NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU (CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACTS 2012–2016 (updated 2019)

Under these Acts, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with their provisions. Statutory obligations on employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for persons working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016.

CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015 (updated 2019)

The Children First Act 2015 is an important addition to the child welfare and protection system as it will help to ensure that child protection concerns are brought to the attention of Tusla without delay. The Act provides for mandatory reporting of child welfare and protection concerns by key professionals; comprehensive risk assessment and planning for a strong organisational culture of safeguarding in all services provided to children; a provision for a register of non-compliance; and the statutory underpinning of the existing Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group which promotes and oversees cross-sectoral implementation and compliance with Children First.

CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES) ACT 2017 (updated 2019)

This Act addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It also creates offences of the types of activity which may occur during the early stages of the predatory process prior to the actual exploitation of a child, for example, using modern technology to prey on children and making arrangements to meet with a child where the intention is to sexually exploit the child. The Act also recognises the existence of underage, consensual peer relationships where any sexual activity falls within strictly defined age limits and the relationship is not intimidatory or exploitative.

Tusla Child Protection and Welfare Guidelines

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/publications-and-forms/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/children-first/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/definitions-of-child-abuse/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/concerns/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/>

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/child-safeguarding-statement-compliance-unit-csscu/>

Arts Council Child Protection And Welfare self audit

<http://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Young-people--children-and-education/Child-protection-and-welfare/>

Department for child protection

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/d1b594-children-first/>

National Quality Frameworks:

- [Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework](#)
- [Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education](#)

List of National support Organisations

Mental Health Links

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/links/links-by-topic/mental-health-links/>

Children and Young Peoples Health Organizations

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/sui/library/guides/org-irl.html>

Tusla Report Forms

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.pdf

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Retrospective_Abuse_Report_Form_FINAL.pdf