

Child Protection policy

Child Protection Policy – Confidentiality Statement

Teach Abhaile aims to create a safe spaces that respects children and their families across a diverse range of backgrounds.

Teach Abhaile seeks to provide space where children feel comfortable speaking honestly and openly about themselves and their relations with others.

In this regard, confidentiality is an important tool for our work.

However, information regarding disclosure, allegations or concerns regarding child protection must be shared, at all times, with the Designated Person and treated in a professional and respectful manner.

All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse will be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the interests of the child.

No undertakings of secrecy can be given. Those working with children and family should make this clear to all parties involved.

Where child protection concerns arise, information should only be shared in adherence with the reporting procedures set out within this policy, in the best interests of the child.

Sharing information with others, in accordance with the reporting procedures set out within this policy, in the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.

Parents and Children have a right to know if personal information about them is held on file and being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.

Information which is gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.

All records regarding children and child protection matters will be kept in a safe and confidential manner within the Management office at Teach Abhaile .

Access to these records is strictly limited to the Owner and Manager.

Issues of confidentiality will be addressed in training of staff and volunteers at Teach Abhaile..

Child Protection Policy – Reporting Procedures

Designated Person

Teach Abhaile has appointed a Designated Person for Child Protection.

The Designated Person is: Connie Hannon, Owner and Manager Teach Abhaile.

The Co-Designated Person is: Susan Quinlan , Childcare Leader Teach Abhaile

The Designated Person will be available on-call on a 24-hour, 7-day week basis. In the absence of the Designated Person, due to illness or holiday, the Co Designated person will be on-call on the same basis.

Role of Designated Person

- Receives and considers all child protection concerns.
- Maintains contact with appropriate authorities in Community Services, HSE and An Garda Siochana.
- Ensures Teach Abhaile policy / procedures relating to child protection are followed.
- Provides information and advice on protection and welfare at each Abhaile.
- Manages referrals to HSE, with adequate confidential information.
- Liaises with Community Services, HSE and An Garda Siochana.
- Ensures confidentiality / safe recording of Child Protection issues and of individual case histories.
- Provides advice on Child Protection Training needs.

The Designated Person will maintain his/her training and awareness of Child Protection issues to keep him/her updated on new developments.

Procedure for Dealing with Disclosure

Dealing with Disclosure

Teach Abhaile strives to maintain an environment that encourages trust, security and confidence. This enables children to share openly, and may result in a child's disclosure of abuse.

It is important that the child who discloses abuse feels supported and facilitated in what may be a frightening and traumatic process. Feelings of confusion, anger, fear and guilt are possible.

Therefore, there is a great need for the staff member/volunteer to respond in a sensitive manner. A child's disclosure of such information requires real trust and vulnerability.

Responses should keep that in mind and uphold the following guidelines.

How to Respond

It is important that allegations are handled in a sensitive and discreet manner and any response to a child making an allegation should take the following into consideration:

- Actively listen to the child , ensuring that they feel heard.
- Inform the child of your duty to report their disclosure as early as possible in the conversation. Never agree to keep the disclosure secret.
- React calmly, over-reaction may intimidate and increase any feelings of guilt
- Reassure the child that it was right to tell someone what happened.
- Be careful when asking questions. Conversation should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification. Never ask leading questions.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser to the child.

Staff Procedure

If staff, facilitators and volunteers of Teach Abhaile receive a disclosure of abuse or sexual abuse from a child, they should consult immediately with the Designated Person.

Staff, facilitators or volunteers receiving disclosure from a child must record the details in writing and sign and date it. This must then be passed onto the Designated Person as soon as possible.

The Designated Person will report to the HSE in the child's area or, in an emergency out-of-hours case, An Garda Siochana will be informed.

The Chief Executive Officer will be informed that a report has been made to the HSE. All suspicions of abuse should be handled through the Designated Person, who should fill out the standard reporting form, which should then be passed on to the HSE Duty Social Work office, in the Community Care Area of the child.

Involvement of Parents/Carers

When suspicions of abuse are reported to the HSE or An Garda Síochána, it is good practice that parents/carers should also be informed, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Reporting Form

A copy of the Reporting Form to be used with the HSE is attached in Appendix– Reporting Form.

Contact Details

A list of relevant contact details for support services and An Garda Síochána is attached in Appendix Contact Details.

Out-of-hours Emergencies

Any out-of-hours emergencies should be reported immediately to the Designated Person, or the Chief Executive Officer, who will then decide whether to contact An Garda Síochána using the contact details in Appendix. Prompt response

All verbal and written reports must be made to the HSE without delay.

Concerns not requiring HSE Referral

The Designated Person will decide whether or not to refer matters to the HSE, recording their decision.

Any matters not referred to the HSE, should be noted within a Child Protection incident file, along with any decisions made and signed by the Designated Person .

The Designated Person will inform the staff, facilitator or volunteer in writing of any decision not to refer to the HSE.

If any staff, facilitator or volunteers feel uncomfortable with a decision made in this context, they have the right (and responsibility) to file a report on their own.

Procedure for Dealing with Concerns / Suspicion of Abuse

Staff, facilitators and volunteers working with children must share their concerns about child protection or child welfare with the Designated Person at Teach Abhaile .

Staff / Facilitator/Volunteer Procedure

If staff, facilitators and volunteers of Teach Abhaile receive a disclosure of abuse or sexual abuse from a child , they should consult immediately with the Designated Person.

Staff, facilitators or volunteers receiving disclosure from a child must record the details in writing and sign and date it. This must then be passed onto the Designated Person as soon as possible.

The Designated Person will report to the HSE in the young person's area or, in an emergency out-of-hours case, An Garda Siochana will be informed.

All suspicions of abuse should be handled through the Designated Person, who should fill out the standard reporting form, which should then be passed on to the HSE Duty Social Work office, in the Community Care Area of the child.

Concerns must not be shared outside the designated channel of communication outlined within the reporting procedure for disclosure.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The statutory authorities must be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. The following examples constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- Specific indication from the child that she/he was abused
- An account by the person who saw the child being abused.
- Evidence such as injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect. (It should be noted that Teach Abhaile staff, facilitators and volunteers will rarely be in an appropriate position to make informed judgements regarding this ground for concern. Any queries or concerns in this regard should be discussed and actions authorised through the Designated Person.)

Child Protection Policy – Recruitment Procedures

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.

- All staff, facilitator and volunteer positions are to be advertised as widely as possible, with clear and recorded recruitment procedures.
- All staff, facilitators and volunteers must have a clearly outlined job description.
- All staff, facilitators and volunteers must complete an application form, and provide two referees, who are not family members, and a current garda vetting reference or when unavailable, a declaration of offences. The referees will be clearly asked to provide a written statement outlining their opinion on whether the candidate is suitable to work with children.
- Applicants with convictions against children will be excluded from employment and / or volunteering at Teach Abhaile.
- All prospective staff, facilitators and volunteers will be selected on the basis of an interview, telephone interview or selection meeting.
- All staff, facilitators and volunteers will be required to provide proof of identity, i.e. photographic identification or identification with signature.
- All staff will sign an 'employment contract' with Teach Abhaile.
- All facilitators will sign a 'facilitation contract' with Teach Abhaile.
- All volunteers will sign a 'volunteer (term of stay) agreement' with Teach Abhaile. .
- Each new staff member will undergo a probationary period of 6 months.
- Facilitators and volunteers will undergo a probationary period of 3 months.

All staff, facilitators and volunteers will receive and sign-off on child protection training. This will take place during the staff, facilitator and volunteer induction on an annual basis.

Child Protection Policy – Management of Staff,

Supervision

Supervision and support of staff, facilitators and volunteers at Teach Abhaile happens in three ways:

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.

1. All staff attend regular meetings where issues are raised and discussed.
2. All staff and volunteers receive supervision and regular team meetings .

Induction

- All staff will receive child protection training on an in-house basis in line with 'Children First'.
- This takes place during the staff and volunteer induction on an annual basis, with review discussions at community and staff meetings during the year.

Training

Teach Abhaile is responsible for coordinating the training needs of all staff in relation to the provision of Child Protection and Welfare.

Child Protection Policy – Code of Behaviour

- Teach Abhaile staff will work with children to provide safe spaces for children, ensuring they are safeguarded, physically and emotionally, in a healthy learning environment
- The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions, activities and programmes involving children at Teach Abhaile..

Teach Abhaile expects all those working with children to:

- Actively listen to the child, taking account of their expression of needs and concerns.
- Value and respect children as individuals.
- Involve children in decisions made about them, in as participative and appropriate a manner as possible.
- Encourage and support children with praise and positive due regard.

Code of Practice

Teach Abhaile does not accept the following behaviours and will intervene to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all children:

- Bullying.
- Violence.
- Sarcasm, name-calling, 'slagging', and other forms of scapegoating.
- Favouring some to the exclusion of others.
- Abusive language or gestures.
- Negative criticism of childrens values, beliefs and opinions.
- Negatively highlighting physical, social or emotional differences.

Required Standards of Behaviour.

These standards are the requirements of Teach Abbhaile for all those working with children to avoid situations that might give rise to unjustified allegations of abuse. The standards are good practice and must be followed by all staff, facilitators, volunteers, members, council and other individuals coming into contact with children at Teach Abhaile.

1. Be sensitive to risks of personal safety and the possibility of unfounded allegations that can arise. Never request or agree to meet with a child alone.
2. When meeting children, always leave the door to the meeting room open and ensure another member of the staff/facilitation/volunteer team is present. Always offer the option to a child to have a friend present at any meeting.
3. Do not give lifts in cars to individual children alone. Always have another member of the staff present. Ensure your insurance cover is adequate for this
4. Be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over-involved or spending excessive time with any one child.
5. Monitor any physical contact between yourself and children, ensuring that at all times contact is appropriate to a particular task and verifiable. Do not offer hugs, pats on head or massages.
6. Always make sure that there are sufficient staff/facilitators/volunteers available to:
 - Ensure maximum safety, participation, learning and fun in activities.
 - Anticipate and control disruptive behaviour by children by setting clear boundaries and maintaining a group contract.
7. When dealing with disruptive individuals on a one-to-one basis, always ensure you are accompanied by another member of the staff/facilitation/volunteer team. All instances of disruptive behaviour are to be reported in staff meetings. If disruption risks the safety of either yourself or the group you should contact the Designated contact immediately and provide a written report.

Photographs

Permission must be sought prior to the making of any photographs at Teach Abhaile involving children, This is clarified in booking forms with a check box declaration. Official photographs may only be taken in a planned manner in which the programme team, the group/schools, and the children / parents have given their informed consent.

Facilities :

Washing and toilet areas should be separate for staff/children.

Outdoor Activities

1. Outdoor activities must be suitable for the age, development and needs of the children.
2. All teachers and instructors must be adequately qualified and insured.
3. Written parental/guardian consent for outdoor activities is required.
4. All equipment must be checked for safety before each activity.
5. First Aid facilities must be made available. Each leader/facilitator should check this in advance and ensure they have sufficient access.

Activities / Visits Organised by Teach Abhaile

When organising activities / visits staff, facilitators and volunteers must ensure:

- The physical and emotional safety of all children concerned is paramount.
- A clear programme of activity should be designed and shared with the participants.
- Children and Parents must have regular input into the programme and should have the opportunity to provide feedback throughout and at the end of the activity / visit through regular meetings and evaluation.
- All facilities and activities should be checked for appropriateness and risk prior to booking.
- Written Parental/Guardian consent is required for those activities involving children less than 18 years of age.
- Emergency contact numbers, dietary and medical requirements are required for each participant. (See Parental Consent Form).
- Clear information on the activity must be made available to parents / guardians beforehand to explain the programme, travel arrangements, emergency contact details and requirements in

a 'things to bring' list.

A copy of the Child Protection statement should be included in this information, along with any other relevant policy information.

- Staff, facilitators and volunteers should ensure, in so far as is reasonable, that buildings, equipment and facilities are safe.
- Staff, facilitators and volunteers must ensure that sleeping and washing areas are adequate.

Child Protection Policy – Code of Behaviour

- Emergency contact information for participants, activity providers, accommodation and Úlla Beag management must be checked and recorded prior to the activity taking place.

The childcare act does refer to the adult:child ratio in caring for children which will influence the activities that will be carried out in the preschool setting.

(i) Full Day Care Service

AGE RANGE	ADULT /CHILD RATIO
<i>0-1 year</i>	<i>1:3</i>
<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>1:5</i>
<i>2-3 years</i>	<i>1:6</i>
<i>3-6 years</i>	<i>1:8</i>

Where a full day care service also caters for children who do not attend on a full day basis, the adult/child ratio and group size for sessional services should apply, as appropriate.

- Adequate insurance coverage for all activities must be checked and secured.

Child Protection Policy – Parental Involvement

A full copy of the Child Protection policy is made available for parents.

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.

All parents and children involved in Teach Abhaile organised programmes are also to be given a copy of the Child Protection Statement, which refers to the full Child Protection Policy and its access through the website upon sending a parental consent form as children apply for a particular activity.

Parents / carers of children are informed of programmes and all related concerns in information about programme activities sent with the parental consent form.

In any event which requires information to be shared with the HSE or the An Garda Siochana, parents should be notified unless doing so is likely to endanger the young person.

Information about Teach Abhaile and its activities is available through its website (www.teachabhaile.com). Information leaflets and notices are also available, which will be sent out to parents with the Parental Consent Form.

Parents are reminded and encouraged to contact a named us at Teach Abhaile for any further queries.

Child Protection Policy –Procedure for Allegations against Staff, Facilitators or Volunteers

All allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and efficiently, with the best interests of the child taking prime concern. All persons concerned are entitled to a proper response and therefore two separate procedures are involved:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child
- The procedure for dealing with the worker.
- Teach Abhaile will at all times ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.

Reporting Procedure in respect of the child

This procedure is the responsibility of the Designated Person

1. The person who receives the allegation from the child should record the details in writing, sign and date it and then pass it on to the Designated Person.
2. Upon receipt of an allegation against staff, facilitators or volunteers, the Designated Person will:
 - Speak with the child involved, to clarify the allegation.
 - Record the allegation dated and signed.
 - Inform the manager.
3. The Designated Person will:
 - In consultation with the manager, decide whether or not to contact the HSE or An Garda Siochana.
 - Inform the parent/carer and/or teacher / leader of the child involved.
 - Record this decision dated and signed.

Procedure for dealing with the worker

This procedure is the responsibility of the Manager.

1. Upon receipt of an allegation the Designated Person will inform the manager
2. The manager will then:
 - Meet with the staff, facilitator or volunteer whom the allegation has been made against, informing them of an allegation against them and allowing them to respond to the allegation.
 - Record the meeting signed and dated by both parties.

3. The Manager may then suspend the staff member, facilitator or volunteer, depending on the seriousness of the allegation and in consultation with the HSE / An Garda Siochana, pending a full inquiry.

- This suspension will be recorded, dated and signed.

3. Upon completion of inquiries a further disciplinary hearing will be heard, and appropriate action taken as required.

- This hearing will also be recorded, dated and signed.

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 2 – Legislative Impact on the Policy

The main legislation governing the care and protection of children is the Child Care Act, 1991. The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 are also relevant to child protection and welfare.

Child Protection Policy –Definitions within the Policy

Staff – People employed on a contract basis either part-time or full-time.
Staff .

Volunteers – Volunteers are parents who donate their time to Teach Abhaile..

Facilitators – Facilitators are professionals who provide facilitation services to Teach Abhaile in either a voluntary or contracted capacity.

Child- Person under 18 years of age.

Neglect - Where a 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 or medical care.

Emotional Abuse – When a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

Physical abuse - is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Sexual abuse - Occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. This includes consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person (less than 17 years of age).

The following legislation impacts on the Policy:

The Child Care Act, 1991

Domestic Violence Act, 1996

Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998

The Data Protection Act 1988

The Education Act, 1988

The Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997

Freedom of Information Act, 1997

Child Protection Policy – Standard Reporting Form

Private and Confidential

In case of emergency or outside HSE hours, contact should be made with An Garda Siochana.

A. To Principal Social Worker/Designate:

1. Details of Child:

Name: Male / Female

Address:

Age/DOB :

1a. Mother's Name:

Father's Name:

Address:

Address:

Tel:

Tel:

1b.

Care and custody arrangements for the child (if known):

1c.

Members of Household:

Name

Relationship

DOB

Additional Information

Child Protection Policy –Standard Reporting Form

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s), or incident(s), dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view, child's view(s) (if known).

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Name: Age :

Male / Female :

Address:

Relationship:

Occupation:

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.

4. Name and Address of other personnel / agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: School

Public Health Nurse

An Garda Siochana

Hospital

Child Protection Policy : Standard Reporting Form

5. Are Parents / Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes / No

If yes, what is their attitude: _____

6. Details of Persons Reporting Concerns:

Name

Occupation

Address

Tel

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.

7. Details of Persons completing this form.

Name

Date

Occupation

Signed

Note: This Form should be printed on yellow paper

Copy to be sent to HSE Designate

Copy to be held on file by Child Protection Designated Person

Teach Abhaile Pre School/After School ,Ennis.