



Craobh Leamhcáin

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Guidelines & Procedures in respect of Craobh Leamhcáin's involvement with Children/Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults

Definitions:

- A child or young person is defined as any person less than 18 years
- A "vulnerable adult" means a person other than a child who is suffering from a disability, impairment or disorder which is of such a nature or degree as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard themselves against harm by another person or that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living.

INTRODUCTION

Craobh Leamhcáin is a branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and fully recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection. Our policy applies to all branch officers, branch members, tutors, volunteers etc. working with the branch.

Comhaltas Ceolteóirí Éireann is an international organisation with many years' experience in passing on our cultural traditions to younger generations through music, song, dance and the Irish language.

As a Craobh Leamhcáin officer, tutor, member or volunteer, it is important to understand that you are in a position of responsibility, authority and trust with respect to the young people you may work with or come in contact with, within the course of Craobh Leamhcáin's related activities.

Within Craobh Leamhcáin the welfare of children/young people and vulnerable adults, their health and well-being and their best interests are considered paramount.

Craobh Leamhcáin members are required to adhere to the Policy, Procedures and Code of Practice in the exercise of their duties.

This document is written to ensure that working with Craobh Leamhcáin, in whatever capacity, will be a safe and enjoyable experience for all involved.

POLICY STATEMENT

At the Craobh Leamhcáin branch of Comhaltas Ceolteóirí Éireann the health, safety and well-being of all our children/young people/vulnerable adults is of paramount importance to all the officers, members, tutors and volunteers. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in all our activities.

In our activities we value our children, young people and vulnerable adults. A culture of mutual respect between children/young people/vulnerable adults and those who represent the Branch in all its activities will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practice in this context.

Craobh Leamhcáin recognises that good child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved including tutors, branch officers, members and volunteers, as these policies can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

This Policy will be reviewed every 24 months with it being put for adoption to every second A.G.M. following the A.G.M. at which it is adopted.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that tutors, branch officers, branch members and volunteers are clear about the actions necessary with regard to child protection issues. The aims of the policy are:

- To raise the awareness of tutors, branch officers, branch members and volunteers and to identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To ensure effective communication between tutors, branch officers, branch members and volunteers when dealing with child protection issues.
- To apply the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.

LEGISLATION

Under The Children First Act 2015 and Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 - voluntary sector organisations such as Comhaltas have a statutory duty of care for the children and young people to whom we provide services.

- The Children First Act 2015 obliges certain professionals and others working with children to report child protection concerns to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and to assist the Agency, if requested to do so, in its assessment of a child protection risk.
- The Children First Act 2015 puts elements of the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) on a statutory footing. The legislation forms part of a suite of child protection legislation which includes the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012 and the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
- The revised Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children was published in July 2011. The Guidance sets out a number of key messages relating to the duty to protect children. Among these are that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, that children will have safer lives where everyone is attentive to their wellbeing and that people who work with children across a range of areas understand their responsibility for safe practice and the reporting of concerns. It provides greater clarity and guidance for individuals and organisations in identifying and responding appropriately to child abuse and

neglect and sets out specific protocols for Social Workers in the Child and Family Agency, Gardaí and other front line staff in dealing with suspected abuse and neglect of children.

- The principle, which should inform best practice in child protection, is that the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is of paramount importance.

All organisations, whether statutory or voluntary, have an overall corporate responsibility to safeguard children, and should pay particular attention to:

- Safe and clearly defined methods of selecting staff and volunteers
- Developing effective procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns
- Identifying a designated staff member/volunteer to act as a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) with outside agencies and as a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns.

The DLP will be responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA) and/or An Garda Síochána. (Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017).

The Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) has a primary responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of children. An Garda Síochána also has statutory responsibilities for the safety and welfare of children. Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for professionals such as teachers, child care workers, health professionals and those working with adults with serious parenting difficulties. It is also an important responsibility for staff and volunteers involved in COMHALTAS CÉOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN catering for children.

The Agency (TUSLA) should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.

A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the Agency (TUSLA).

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
- Reports should be made without delay to the Agency.

COMPLIANCE

This policy document applies to all Comhaltas activities in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Britain, North America and elsewhere. They have been designed to work within current guidelines to meet the legislative requirements of each country. Should any conflict arise between any of our policies and

procedures and the laws of individual countries then the relevant law will take precedence. We will endeavour to ensure that our policy documents are updated appropriately to reflect future changes in the law.

RATIONALE

- To adopt a Policy and Code Of Practice on safeguarding the welfare of children/young people/vulnerable adults.
- To plan and monitor the work of Comhaltas so as to eliminate situations where the abuse of a child may occur
- To apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all staff, members and volunteers
- To use supervision as a means of protecting children
- To ensure that staff, branch members and volunteers are aware of this Policy, Code Of Practice and Child Protection procedures to be followed

FIVE ELEMENTS

1. We establish a safe environment in which children can learn, perform and develop

- a. We create an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to communicate and are listened to.
- b. We ensure children know that there are adults in Craobh Leamhcáin whom they can approach if they have concerns.
- c. We ensure that adult members of Craobh Leamhcáin and other adults working with Craobh Leamhcáin possess an understanding of the responsibility placed on the organisation for child protection by stating its obligation in this policy.

2. We raise awareness of the child protection issues among members and co-workers

- a. We ensure every member in contact with children is aware of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures and are aware of their inherent responsibilities.
- b. We raise awareness of the Child Protection Policy with all members, officers, parents, tutors and volunteers.
- c. All tutors and committee members are required to complete the TUSLA Children First E-Learning Programme
<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>

3. We practise safe recruitment and check the suitability of tutors

- a. We recognise the importance of Garda vetting for tutors, committee members and others who are given responsibility to work with children. Comhaltas, as a voluntary organisation, has registered with the NVB (National Vetting Bureau). Current legislation requires mandatory vetting for all personnel working with children in Éire.

4. We implement procedures in respect of suspected, alleged or confirmed cases of abuse

- a. We recognise that members may in some instances have cause for concern. Should this occur, guidance should be sought from the DLP Sinéad Coleman or Assistant Designated Liaison Person (ADLP) (Chair of the Branch Committee – Dara Mac Craith), who will liaise with statutory agencies, namely TUSLA - The Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána.

- b. We will maintain effective links with the relevant agencies and cooperate with any enquiry regarding child protection matters.
- c. We will follow child protection procedures where an allegation is made against a tutor, member or volunteer or where a disclosure is made to a tutor, member or volunteer (Refer to “Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (1999, 2009, 2017) .
- d. Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Such children include those with disabilities, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse – are applicable, but may take a slightly different form. For example, abuse may take the form of deprivation of basic rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or the inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints. All those involved in caring for children in residential settings, including those for educational and recreational purposes, outside of the home (as in the case of attendance at Comhaltas classes/functions) must be alert to the possibility of abuse by other children, visitors and members. Please see Appendix 1 for further details regarding the definitions of abuse.

5. We recognise the possibility of retrospective disclosures by adults

- a. An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhoods. Such disclosures often come to light when adults attend counselling. It is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in such disclosures.
- b. If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the counsellor/ health professional should report the allegation to the HSE Children and Family Services without delay.
- c. The HSE 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 www.hse-ncs.ie/en). The service can be accessed either through healthcare professionals or by way of self-referral (Freephone 1800 477477).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Craobh Leamhcáin has implemented policies and procedures covering:

- 1) Code of practice for all branch officers, tutors, members or volunteers
- 2) Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- 3) Confidentiality policy
- 4) Recruitment and selection of tutors and committee members
- 5) Tutor and committee member induction and training
- 6) Involvement of primary carers .i.e. (parents/ guardians)
- 7) Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff
- 8) Complaints and comments
- 9) Incidents and accidents

1) Code of Practice

The following guidance includes a variety of contexts in which Comhaltas members carry out their activities.

This Code of Practice is to safeguard the welfare of young children in our charge and to ensure that safe and sensible steps will be taken to ensure the safe practice and environment for young people, branch members and volunteers alike.

a) Branch Activities and Classes

Craobh Leamhcáin will:

- Be responsible for the appointment of tutors.
- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone number, attendance, emergency contact).
- Ensure that ideally two branch adults, preferably one male and one female, or an adult tutor and one other adult arrive together to open the venue in so far as that is possible.
- Arrange seating appropriately for both tutor and pupil with respect to physical proximity.
- When a tutor is dealing with an individual pupil the door must remain open unless there is a clear pane of glass on the door. Also ensure another adult, preferably a Branch adult, is in close vicinity.
- It is necessary for a tutor to report inappropriate behaviour to a Branch adult and to the DLP.
- Trust your intuition if a pupil is acting inappropriately and take action, i.e. share concerns with the DLP and implement measures to reduce risk.
- Use verbal affirmation to praise rather than physical touch.
- Never use physical forms of discipline.
- Tutors and parents should be made aware of class timetable.
- Ensure that after class all children are collected promptly and two Branch adults, preferably one male and one female or a tutor and one other adult are present to lock up the venue.
- Ensure adequate supervision of young people while they are waiting for class.
- Drop off and collection times should be strictly adhered to.
- Maintain a class register (Appendix 2).
- Maintain an incident book and record details of any child welfare incident – date, time, place and summary of the incident will be recorded.

b) Travel and Overnight Accommodation

By Car

- Ensure that two adults, preferably one male and one female, travel in the car when only one child is being transported.
- When transporting young person's seat them in the back seat.
- Only carry the appropriate number vis a vis seat belts.
- Seat belts must always be worn.
- Journey duration should be reported to another adult.

- A parental consent form must be completed regarding trips/outings.

By Bus:

- Use a reputable coach company and check their insurance.
- Ensure all children have seats and that seat belts are used.
- Ensure sufficient ratio of adults/supervisors to children during travel.

Trips involving overnight accommodation:

- Parents who are present are responsible for the safety of their own children.
- Where a parent is not travelling, a parental consent form should be completed by the parent and another adult nominated to take responsibility for that child.
- Particular care will be taken to ensure that the privacy of children is respected at all times.
- Separate accommodation must be provided for boys and girls.
- Care is taken to ensure that there is adequate gender based supervision in the sleeping area.

c) Authorisation for Photography/Video and Audio Recording

Child protection issues and sensitivity towards identity theft have presented challenges to all those involved with recording images of people for promotional purposes. In the same way that video and audio recordings require authorisation and permissions at competitions, it is also important to follow the proper procedures in photographing young persons at Craobh Leamhcáin events. A model release form is available in the downloads section of the Press room at https://comhaltas.ie/press_room/detail/photographic_model_release/.

The subjects of any photographs must be informed that their picture has been taken and may be used for promotional purposes by Craobh Leamhcáin. Subjects or their parents/guardians (if under 18 years) must be given the choice to sign a photograph permission form.

d) Insurance

The Comhaltas Ceolteóirí Éireann Insurance Policy provides cover for the Craobh Leamhcáin branch activities. While Comhaltas has an Insurance Policy the following rules must be adhered to:

- Ensure adults are first to arrive at the venue.
- Ensure classes are supervised if or when the tutor has to leave the room.
- Ensure that all pupils have been collected prior to the adults leaving the venue.
- Pupils must be supervised at all times.
- Ensure the venues are safe from all/any potential hazards.

2) Reporting of Suspected or Disclosed Abuse

Designated Liaison Person (DLP):

A DLP (Sinéad Coleman) and a ADLP (Dara Mac Craith) have been nominated by Craobh Leamhcáin. The DLP and ADLP have responsibility for managing child protection issues within the branch.

The role and responsibilities of the DLP are:

- To implement and promote Craobh Leamhcáin's Child Protection Policy.
- To ensure good practice and proper procedures are in place to deal with all Child Protection issues.
- To act as the Branch contact for child protection within the branch.
- To provide information and advice on child protection for the branch membership.
- To create awareness of the importance of child protection.
- To communicate with members on child protection issues.
- To keep abreast of developments and understand the most recent information on related issues – data protection, confidentiality, legal and other, that impact on child protection.
- To maintain confidential records of reported cases and actions taken and to liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure that they have access to all necessary information.
- To regularly monitor and to review on a bi-annual basis the branch Policy and Procedures.
- To provide Induction Training for new tutors and members as the need arises.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern Regarding Child Protection are as follows:

- Where a disclosure is made by a child to a teacher or member of the committee.
- Where a statement/report (verbal/written) is given by a person who allegedly witnessed the abuse.
- An injury or illness consistent with abuse.
- Corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.
- Please see Appendix 3 for further details.

(A suspicion not supported by any objective signs does not constitute reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.)

Procedures Where There is an Allegation/Suspicion or Disclosure that a Child Has Been Abused.

- If a member of Comhaltas receives an allegation, or has a suspicion that a child is being abused, he or she must, in the first instance, consult with the branch DLP.
- It is important that the suspicions or allegations are recorded by the DLP.
- In cases where an allegation is made, the DLP must report the matter immediately to the relevant authorities, ie. to the designated officer in the Child & Family Agency social work department (TUSLA) or to An Garda Síochána (NOTE: Any query or concern in relation to children out of hours should be reported to An Garda Síochána). The DLP or ADLP will provide a written report using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form, which can be found at <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/#SRP>
- It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in a confidential manner.
- It is NOT the responsibility of the DLP or any other person to find a resolution or discuss the matter with anyone else except the appropriate agencies.
- All advice proffered by TUSLA - Child & Family Agency social work department and An Garda Síochána should be strictly adhered to.
- Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a branch member/teacher/officer, the DLP shall immediately act in accordance with the procedures outlined above.
- Once a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure shall be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it.

- Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written statement should be sought from this person.
- Whether or not the matter is being reported to the Child & Family Agency or An Garda Síochána, the DLP shall always inform the branch officers of the allegation.
- Where the allegation or concern relates to the DLP, the matter should be reported to the branch officers. In such cases, the branch officers, as appropriate, shall assume the role normally undertaken by the DLP and shall follow the procedures outlined above.
- From this point on, only the Statutory Authorities should deal with the matter.

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

The **Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998** makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse ‘reasonably and in good faith’ to designated officers of the HSE or to any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. A person who makes a report in good faith and in the child’s best interests may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege. The main provisions of the Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána.
- The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report “knowing that statement to be false”.
- “A person shall not be liable in damages in respect of the communication, whether in writing or otherwise, by him or her to an appropriate person of his or her opinion that
 - A child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or
 - A child’s health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected unless it is proved that he or she has not acted reasonably and in good faith in forming that opinion and communicating it to the appropriate person”
 - Unless it is proved that he or she has not acted reasonably and in good faith in forming that opinion and communicating it to the appropriate person”

3) Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of the Craobh Leamhcáin branch of Comhaltas Ceolteoirí Éireann to keep confidential any information about the children, their families, the teachers and committee members. Any information held on file on the above persons will be treated in a strictly confidential manner except in terms of legal obligation i.e. child protection.

- Parents will have access to records kept in the branch, only in relation to their own child.
- The principles of confidentiality will be raised with all teachers and committee members and impressed upon them, that it is not acceptable to discuss matters in relation to the children or their families outside the Branch.
- All documents relating to Child Protection issues will be stored in a secure location at the

residence of the DLP.

- In the event of a Child Protection report any information provided to the DLP/ADLP will be reported to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána and will remain confidential. Where information is received it will only be disclosed if the welfare of the child requires it and only to those with a legitimate need to know.
- Sharing information with statutory agencies in relation to Child Protection concerns is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- If information is being shared with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency due to a child protection concern, the child's parents/guardians will first be informed of this report unless to do so will put the child at further risk.
- Where a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or committee member **no promise of secrecy should be made to the child.**

4) Recruitment and Selection of Tutors and Committee Members

The Craobh Leamhcáin branch of Comhaltas Ceolteóirí Éireann will co-operate with An Garda Síochána's vetting procedures in relation to tutors and committee members.

All tutors and committee members will be required to complete and sign the Garda Vetting form.

Where a disclosure occurs as a result of the Garda vetting process, this will be discussed at subcommittee level to ensure that no unsuitable person will be allowed to work with children.

Where a disclosure in the nature of child abuse occurs from the Garda Vetting process, this person will not be allowed work with children.

5) Tutor and Committee Member Induction and Training

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson and the DLP that all new tutors and committee members will receive Induction Training on appointment.

They will be made aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures, the Confidentiality Policy and their responsibilities therein.

They will also be made aware of the DLP and the role of the DLP within the branch.

All tutors and committee members are required to complete the TUSLA Children First E-Learning Programme.

All teachers and committee members are required to sign a declaration stating they have received induction in the Child Protection Policy and the Confidentiality Policy of the branch (Appendix 4).

Regular review of work practices and supervision of procedures will take place throughout the year by the committee the DLP and the ADLP.

6) Involvement of Primary Carers

Procedures for Informing Parents/ Primary Carers

If the DLP is required to make a report on behalf of a child to TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency, the child's parents/guardians will first be informed of this report unless to do so will put the child at further risk.

The address for the local office of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency – Dublin West is stated below:

Bridge House

Cherry Orchard Hospital

Ballyfermot

Dublin 10

Ph. (01) 6206387

Office hours 9.00am -1.00 pm

2.15pm – 5pm

Primary Carers Policy

- The Craobh Leamhcáin branch of Comhaltas Ceolteóirí Éireann welcomes all primary carers to the branch during class hours.
- Craobh Leamhcáin commit to being open with all primary carers.

Craobh Leamhcáin branch undertake to:

- advise all primary carers of our Child Protection policy.
- inform primary carers of all branch events and activities.
- operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice.
- adhere to our recruitment guidelines.
- ensure as far as possible that activities are age-appropriate.
- encourage and facilitate the involvement of parents, guardians, carers or responsible adults where appropriate.
- on enrolment of their child, all primary carers will be directed to existence of the Child Protection policy on the Craobh Leamhcáin branch website when it is agreed upon and uploaded.
- All information on activities will be made available to primary carers by the erection of notices each Wednesday in the branch, on the Craobh Leamhcáin website and by web texts.
- Signed Parental Consent Forms will be required for photographic images of the children used on the Craobh Leamhcáin website or for Craobh Leamhcáin promotional purposes.
- Signed consent forms will be required when a child is travelling as part of Craobh Leamhcáin's activities.
- Signed consent forms will be required where an unaccompanied minor travels overnight with the branch. Another adult must be nominated as the child's guardian for the duration of that trip. As per committee discussion

7) Procedures for Dealing with Allegations against Staff

- In the event of an allegation against a tutor or committee member, the DLP will deal with

issues in relation to the child while the Chairperson will deal with the person who has the allegation made against them.

- The tutor/committee member will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given the opportunity to respond.
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against a tutor/committee member will be taken in consultation with the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána.
- The Chairperson will advise the accused person of the above consultation and agreed procedures will be followed, e.g. suspension and further investigation, increased supervision.
- To ensure the safety and welfare of the child the first priority is to take whatever action is required to ensure that the child is not exposed to unnecessary risk.
- The primary carer and the child where age appropriate, will be kept up to date with all stages of the process.

8) Complaints and Comments Procedure

All complaints and comments will be directed to Chairperson. The Chairperson's contact details are outlined below:

Name Dara Mac Craith

Address Craobh Leamhcáin, 22 Larkfield Rise, Lucan, Co. Dublin.

Mobile Phone Number 087 9648699

- All complaints and comments will be responded to within two weeks.
- All complaints will be recorded in a Complaints Record Book.

9) Incidents and Accidents Procedures

- Where first aid is required, assistance should be sought from a Branch Committee Member on site.
- Either Dara Mac Craith or the Qualified First Aider on call will consult with the injured person if possible, to establish whether an ambulance is required.
- The primary carer should be informed of the accident as soon as possible in the case of serious injury or illness.
- The incident/accident should be recorded in the incident book (Appendix 5).
- The primary carer should be informed of any minor incident on collection of child.
- One of the two On-site First Aiders must be informed of any entry in the incident book.

- A First Aid Box is located at the front door
- An Incident book will be located at the desk.

***This policy was adopted at the AGM on the 24th October 2018 and will be reviewed bi-annually.**

***It will be next reviewed in October 2020.**

Appendix 1

Definitions of abuse

There are four main categories of abuse as outlined in Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). The following is a synopsis of the information contained in that document. For full definitions, please refer to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011) (pp.8-12).

Neglect

“Neglect can be defined in terms of an *omission*, 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, and/or medical care.”

“Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment of the impairment of the health or development of a child.”

“The *threshold of significant harm* is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.” (Children First (2011) p.8)

Emotional abuse

“Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than as a specific event or pattern of events.”

“Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.” (Children First (2011) p.8)

“Emotional abuse can be manifested in the child’s behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The *threshold of significant harm* is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become *typical* of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.” (Children First (2011) p.9)

Examples of emotional abuse in children may include:

- “the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carer;
- Unresponsiveness, of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way;

- under or over-protection of the child;
 - failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
 - use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
 - exposure to domestic violence.
 - Exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.”
- (Children First (2011) pp 8-9)

Physical abuse

“Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

Physical abuse can involve:

- severe physical punishment;
- beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- pushing, shaking or throwing;
- pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- terrorising with threats;
- observing violence;
- use of excessive force in handling;
- deliberate poisoning;
- suffocation;
- fabricated/induced illness
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child.”

(Children First (2011) p. 9)

Sexual abuse

“Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- masturbation in the presence of the child or involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal or anal;

- sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse;
- consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.”

(Children First (2011) pp 9-10)

Appendix 2

SIGN IN SHEET FOR EXTRA GRÚPA CHEOIL/CÉILÍ BAND/EXTRA MUSIC PRACTICE

Tutor _____ Venue _____

Date _____ Time _____

1 _____ 11 _____

2 _____ 12 _____

3 _____ 13 _____

4 _____ 14 _____

5 _____ 15 _____

6 _____ 16 _____

7 _____ 17 _____

8 _____ 18 _____

9 _____ 19 _____

10 _____ 20 _____

Appendix 3

HOW CAN CHILD ABUSE COME TO YOUR ATTENTION?

- *Direct Disclosure*
- *Direct observation*
- *Information from a third party*
- *Observation of an injury*
- *Aspects of the child's behaviour*
- *Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.*

Dealing with Disclosure

DO

- *Stay Calm*
- *Listen*
- *Accept*
- *Reassure*
- *Record in writing*
- *Report*
- *Record your report.*

DON'T

- *Panic*
- *Promise to keep secrets*
- *Ask leading questions*
- *Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily*
- *Delay - Start to investigate.*

Appendix 4

Individual Confirmation Sheet for Child Protection Policy

I confirm that I have received induction in Craobh Leamhcáin's Child Protection (familiarisation with Child Protection Policy and completion of e-learning ????) and Data Protection Policies and I agree to carry out my duties in line with the procedures and guidelines outlined therein.

Name of Tutor/Committee Member: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5

Incident/Accident Report Form

Name of class/event where incident occurred: _____

Date _____ Location: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

Who was involved: _____

Any Injury sustained: _____

Who observed the accident/incident: _____

Who dealt with the situation: _____

Any follow up required: _____

Signature of Tutor/Committee Member _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____