

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of service being provided: Féile Na Bealtaine

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

We in Féile na Bealtaine are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

The principles by which we abide are as follows:

- Treat all children and young people equally;
- Listen to and respect children and young people;
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all children and young people as individuals;
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers;
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session;
- Encourage feedback from group;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

3. Risk assessment

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

Risk identified Procedure in place to manage risk identified

1. Risk: Lack of awareness of Féile na Bealtaine's child protection policy and procedures

Management of this Risk:

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;

- Report any concerns to the Relevant Person and follow reporting procedures;
Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;

2. Risk: Lack of Appropriate Supervision for children working with festival artists / volunteers:

Management of this risk:

- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations;
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Festival artists/volunteers should avoid taking a session on their own and should ensure that teacher is present. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of the teacher / primary carers;
- Festival artists/volunteers should avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed;
- Festival volunteers are instructed to maintain awareness around language and comments made. Festival volunteers to be advised that if they think that something said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.
- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid leaving children unattended or unsupervised; Manage any dangerous materials; Provide a safe environment; Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly. Caregivers or teachers should be with children at all times.

3. Risk: Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

Management of Risk:

- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people;
- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid using or allowing offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid singling out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid allowing/engaging in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Festival volunteers are prohibited from physically chastising children/young people;
- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid socialising inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

4. Risk: Inappropriate physical contact

Management of Risk:

- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Festival volunteers are instructed to avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Festival volunteers are instructed to check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

4. Procedures

Féile na Bealtaine's Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of Féile na Bealtaine activities. These procedures can be found at Appendix 1 of this Statement:

- ⇒ Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child taking part in Féile na Bealtaine activities
- ⇒ Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children
- ⇒ Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- ⇒ Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla
- ⇒ Procedure in relation to confidentiality

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Féile na Bealtaine is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 1st February 2021 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

Peadar Ó Fionnáin
Féile na Bealtaine

Claire Galvin
Féile na Bealtaine

For queries, please contact Peadar Ó Fionnáin or Claire Galvin, Relevant Persons under the Children First Act 2015.

APPENDIX 1

Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child taking part in Féile na Bealtaine activities

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say;
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details;
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate)

Dealing with an allegation against staff: Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Peadar (or nominated deputy) will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Claire (or nominated deputy) will deal with issues related to the staff member.
 - The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
 - If allegations are made against the Relevant Person, then the Deputy Relevant Person should be contacted;
 - The reporting procedures outlined in these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner;
 - The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation; the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond;
 - The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
 - Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Tusla and Gardaí;
 - After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

In the event of complaints or comments: Peadar O Fionnain has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person. Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

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

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary);
- Posts will be advertised widely;
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form;
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form;
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary;

- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process;
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
- Some of the exclusions would include:
 - any child-related convictions;
 - refusal to sign application form and declaration form;
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
 - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- There will be a relevant probationary period;
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought.

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

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that:

New staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session;
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
- Undergo a probationary or trial period.

All staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
- Be provided with child protection training

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

Dr. Peadar O Fionnain has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Relevant Person to liaise with Tusla or Gardaí where appropriate. Peadar can be contacted at Cline Cois Abhann, or at 087 2796182. Claire Galvin has been designated as deputy to Peadar and can be contacted at 087 7903950 Staff should record (AND REPORT VERBALLY TO PEADAR OR CLAIRE), in marked file in office filing cabinet the following information in relation to children and young people:

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

Confidentiality statement

We in Féile na Bealtaine are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality.

However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;

- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances);
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/ young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy