

Presentation Ireland's The Lantern Community Project Safeguarding Children Policy Statement

We value and encourage the participation of children in any activity that enhances their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. We are committed to safeguarding the dignity and rights of all children. We do all in our power to create a safe environment for children. We cooperate fully with the National Board for Safeguarding Children.

Therefore, we:

- Foster best practice in creating safe environments for children
- Ensure accountability through establishing effective structures.
- Support personnel in safeguarding children.
- Respond effectively to allegations and suspicions of abuse.
- Report allegations where there is reasonable cause for concern and cooperate with the civil authorities.
- Take just and appropriate action in relation to Presentation personnel who have abused.
- Take effective measures against future risk of abuse.
- Promote healing and reconciliation.

The following principles inform this document:

- Children have an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.
- Children have an inalienable right to safety and care and to an environment free from abuse and neglect.

- Children have a right to be listened to and be heard, and to be involved, as appropriate in decisions affecting them.
- Those who have suffered abuse should be enabled to disclose this to a trusted person, in the expectation of a sensitive, caring and compassionate response.
- Children have a right to good role models whom they can trust, who will respect them and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development.
- Organisations and institutions have a collective responsibility to operate effective systems to safeguard children and to ensure that all personnel are aware of their responsibility to report concerns about child abuse to the relevant authorities.
- All adults have a duty to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse, where reasonable grounds for concern exist, irrespective of the status of the person suspected or their relationship to them or to the child.
- Due regard must be given to the criminal element of any situation.
- It is the statutory duty of the civil authorities, not individuals or organisations or religious groups, to investigate reports of child abuse.
- Actions taken to protect a child should not cause the child undue distress. Every action and procedure should consider the overall needs of the child.
- A proper balance should be maintained between protecting children and respecting the needs and rights of adults, but where there is a conflict, the welfare of the child is paramount.
- The legal rights of a person accused of child abuse will be respected.
- All agencies and disciplines concerned with the protection and welfare of children must work cooperatively in the best interests of children.

Basic Procedures

Presentation Ireland has put in place the following:

- A recruitment and selection process, with Garda Vetting, for all, including volunteers, who work with children.
- Signed parental consent for each child.
- Appropriate supervision ratios of adults to children, ensuring that no child is left alone with an adult.
- Codes of conduct for staff and children in their charge and, where possible, involving the children in drawing up both codes.
- Proper record keeping must include:-
 - Participant membership forms
 - Incident/accident/complaint report forms
 - Declaration forms for all staff.
 - Medical information/ treatment forms
 - Attendance records for adults and children
 - Contact information for parents/guardians
 - Volunteer/worker application forms
 - Programme records
- Initial and on-going training in safeguarding children and supervision of all adults working with children.
- Additional procedures for away trips, same day and overnight stays.
- Information session for all children and their parents/guardians.

Code of Behaviour for adult workers

Do

- Treat all children with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct
- Be visible to others when working with children
- Challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- Develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
- Respect each child’s boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel there is a problem
- Raise concerns about unacceptable behaviour towards children through the complaints procedure and ‘whistle-blowing’ if necessary
- Make it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views is not acceptable.

Don’t.....

- Spend time alone with a child away from others

Never.....

- Give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children
- Take a child/young person into your home
- Engage in physical games with children except structured sports
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.

- Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded. (always follow procedures in main document)
- Do things of a personal nature for a child, that he/she can do for himself/herself *
- Be secretive.

**Tasks of a personal nature should only be carried out for very young children or children with a disability and with the full understanding and consent of parents. If an emergency arises parents should be informed.*

Actions /decisions taken with any child should be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child.

In recreational activities ...

- Always work openly with children.
- If physical support is needed it should be provided openly.
- If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms, always ensure supervisors are of the appropriate gender and work in pairs.
- When there are groups away from home always ensure that there are supervisors of both genders present.

Summary

Presentation Ireland’s ‘The Lantern Community Project’ is committed to ensuring the safety and well being of all children in our care, while respecting the rights of staff and volunteers and all adults with a responsibility for children. The protection of children is paramount and takes precedence over all other concerns.

**Summary of
Presentation Ireland’s
The Lantern Community Project
Safeguarding Children
Policy and Procedures
Document (2014)**

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