



FIRST FORTNIGHT
THE ART OF MENTAL HEALTH

FIRST FORTNIGHT CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

09/04/2015



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SECTION 1: Child Protection Policy

We First Fortnight are committed to safe guarding the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff; -
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse (see Appendix 1 for categories of abuse);
- Confidentiality; -
- Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers; -
- Managing and supervising staff and volunteers; -
- Involvement of primary carers; -
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff and volunteers; -
- Complaints and comments; -
- Incidents and accidents.

This policy will be reviewed on 09/04/2016

[Signed by Designated Person]:

Date: 09/04/2015



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SECTION 2: Code of Behaviour for Staff and Volunteers

The code of behaviour can be categorised under the following headings:

- Good practice;
- Inappropriate behaviour;
- Physical contact;
- Health and safety.

Good Practice

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally;
- Listen to and respect children and vulnerable adults;
- Involve children and vulnerable adults 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 vulnerable adults as individuals;
- Respect a child's or vulnerable adult's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and vulnerable adults 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 cognisant of a child's or vulnerable adult's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.
- Register each child/vulnerable adult (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make primary carers, children/vulnerable adults, 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 vulnerable adults with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures;
- Organisations should have an anti-bullying policy. Encourage children and vulnerable adults to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy.
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- 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;



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- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations; have guidelines and a prompt sheet for artists; Encourage artists to refer to the Arts Council website for direction.
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist/facilitator 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;
- Avoid taking a session/event/activity on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers;
- 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;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/vulnerable adults;
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Don't single out a particular child/vulnerable adult for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/vulnerable adults;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/vulnerable adults, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

Physical contact

- Seek consent of child/vulnerable adult in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children/vulnerable adults about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

Health and safety

- Don't leave children or vulnerable adults unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly.

SECTION 3: Reporting Procedures

Who to contact regarding child protection and welfare

Edel Doran 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



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followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

Edel Doran can be contacted at First Fortnight Office, 12 South Earl St, Dublin 8, info@firstfortnight.ie, 01 5986263.

David Keegan has been designated as Deputy Designated Person and can be contacted at First Fortnight Office, 12 South Earl St, Dublin 8, david@firstfortnight.ie, 01 5986263.

The following excerpt from Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2 - p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) specific indication from the child or vulnerable adult that s/he has been abused;
- (ii) an account by a person who saw the child/vulnerable adult being abused;
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse [an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour];
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Records will be stored securely and confidentiality will be maintained (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement).

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and vulnerable adults:

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

Dealing with a disclosure

Stay calm and listen to the child/vulnerable adult, 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/vulnerable adult but do not promise to keep anything secret;

Don't make the child/vulnerable adult repeat the details unnecessarily;

Explain to the child/vulnerable adult what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

Reporting procedures

Organisations should develop very clear reporting procedures for matters relating to a child/young person's safety and welfare.

The reporting procedure should be known and accessible to all staff;

The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed;

Actions and outcomes should be noted;



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Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts (for example in an incident book). Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts;

Inform the Designated Person or his or her deputy, if unavailable;

The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk;

The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;

Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement); If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive. (See Appendix 4 for sample form.) Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;

If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly;

In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/ young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.

SECTION 4: Confidentiality Statement

We in First Fortnight 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/vulnerable adult;

Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or vulnerable adult is not a breach of confidentiality;

We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult are at risk;

Primary carers, children and vulnerable adults 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;



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Images of a child/vulnerable adult 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); Where image or information of a child or vulnerable adult is to be used in promotion purposes in our publicity materials, on our website or in connection with First Fortnight events, only first names will be used and specific information avoided;

Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

SECTION 5: Recruiting and Selecting Staff/ Volunteers

Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and vulnerable adults, 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 asked to sign a declaration form (see Appendix 4);
- At least two verbal or written references that are recent, relevant, independent or and verbally confirmed will be necessary (see Appendix 3 for sample reference form);
- 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 and necessary in accordance with official policies, this will be sought.

SECTION 6- Managing and Supervising Staff

Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/vulnerable adults, 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 and vulnerable adult 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;



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- Offer evidence of Garda vetting if working directly with children or vulnerable adults;
- Be provided with child protection training where possible and relevant.

SECTION 7: Involvement of Primary Carers

Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child and vulnerable adult protection policy;
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities;
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant;
- Comply with health and safety practices;
- Operate child and vulnerable adult-centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines;
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate;
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child/vulnerable adult;
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child/vulnerable adult at further risk;
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child and vulnerable adult-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/vulnerable adult first. To that end we will:

Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern (using Tusla Report Form, see Appendix 2);

Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;

Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or vulnerable adult's welfare.

SECTION 8- Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/vulnerable adult Edel Doran will deal with issues related to the vulnerable adult.
 2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made David Keegan will deal with issues related to the staff member.
- The first priority is to ensure that no child or vulnerable adult is exposed to unnecessary risk;
 - If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted;



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- The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/vulnerable adult should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/vulnerable adult 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 Health Service Executive and Gardaí;
- After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

SECTION 9- Complaints and comments procedure

In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within two weeks;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

Section 10- Accidents procedure

- The organisation must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/vulnerable adults involved in the organisation;
- Children/vulnerable adults's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
- External organisations with whom your organisation has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;
- First-aid boxes should be available and regularly re-stocked;
- The location of the first-aid box(es) must be made known to staff;
- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff;
- Children and vulnerable adults must be advised of risks of dangerous material;
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk;
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.

Location of First Aid Box- Under Sink In Kitchen

APPENDIX 1: Definitions of Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse as outlined in Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The following is a synopsis of the information contained in that document. For the full definitions please refer to Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1993 (pp.32-34).

1. Neglect

“Neglect can be defined as being 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.

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 p.31)



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2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse usually happens where there is a relationship between a carer and a child rather than as a specific incident or incidents.

“Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.” (Children First p.31)

Rather, it can manifest in the child’s behaviour or physical functioning. Examples of these include ‘anxious’ attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement and uncooperative or hostile behaviour.

“The threshold of significant harm is reached when interaction is predominantly abusive and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/ carer.” (Children First p.32)

Examples of emotional abuse in children include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carer;
- Unresponsiveness, 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;
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline;
- Exposure to domestic violence.

3. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following:

- Shaking;
- Use of excessive force in handling;
- Deliberate poisoning;
- Suffocation;
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child.

4. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves the use of a child for gratification or sexual arousal by a person for themselves or others.

Examples of 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 a child whether oral, vaginal or anal;



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- Sexual exploitation of a child 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.



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APPENDIX 2: TUSLA

TUSLA An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

FORM NUMBER: CC01:01:01

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W Concerns)

A. To Principal Social Worker/Designate: _____

1. Date of Report

2. Details of Child

Name:	<input type="text"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>	DOB	<input type="text"/>	Age	<input type="text"/>
		School	<input type="text"/>		
Alias	<input type="text"/>	Correspondence address (if different)	<input type="text"/>		
Telephone	<input type="text"/>	Telephone	<input type="text"/>		

3. Details of Persons Reporting Concern(s)

Name:	<input type="text"/>	Telephone No.	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>	Occupation	<input type="text"/>
		Relationship to client	<input type="text"/>
Reporter wishes to remain anonymous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reporter discussed with parents/guardians	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Parents Aware of Report

Are the child's parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported	- Mother	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment	<input type="text"/>		

5. Details of Report

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



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- STANARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERN
APPENDIX 3-Sample Volunteer Reference Form

Confidential

_____ has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with this organisation and has given your name as a referee.

This post involves substantial access to children and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and vulnerable adults?

Yes No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor, should they be offered a volunteer position. We would appreciate you being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? _____

In what capacity? _____

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes them a suitable volunteer?

How would you describe their personality? _____

Please rate this person on the following (please tick):

Poor Average Good V/Good Excellent

Responsibility

Maturity

Self-motivation

Motivation of others

Energy

Trustworthiness

Reliability

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Occupation: _____



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APPENDIX 4: Declaration Form

Declaration Form Confidential

Declaration form for all those working with children and vulnerable adults.

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of birth: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No: _____ Mobile No: _____

Any other name(s) previously known as: _____

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults?

Yes No

If yes, please outline the reason below.

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

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____