

DEC

Child Safeguarding policy

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Introduction

Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church (DEC) comes into contact with a significant number of children every day, week, month and year. Their welfare and safety is paramount to the organisation at all times. This document is in place for all those who are in contact with the children under the umbrella of DEC.

All volunteers and employed workers are to follow the guidelines and procedures in this document to ensure that a safe and healthy environment is kept at all times during the activities that take place under the care of the DEC. This document will be revised and updated every two years.

Declaration of Guiding Principles

Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church (DEC) is an independent Evangelical Christian Church

We provide the following activities to children:

- Lighthouse – Sunday morning programme for those in national school
- Youth Fellowship- Sunday evening programme for children in 1st – 6th year.
- Explorers – Sunday morning programme for pre-school age children

We believe that:

1. Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child who attends our organisation is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children reflect national policy and legislation laid out in the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.
3. Our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures should be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary due to organisational issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
4. All children have an equal right to attend an organisation that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
5. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child who attends our Church activities, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
6. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in the organisation including board members, staff and volunteers.
7. Staff and volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.
8. We are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality.
9. This Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church activities whether in person or on line, on church premises or in other premises, whether in Ireland or abroad.

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Document Terminology

There are a number of terms used throughout the document and for clarity they are defined below.

- Child - For the purposes of this policy, a 'child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age. In Ireland, the Child Care Act (1991) defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.
- Worker- refers to those who are employed by the Church.
- Volunteers- refers to those who assist in the running of programmes or who are involved with the children on a non-employment basis
- Designated Liaison Person refers to the person appointed as a resource to any staff member or coach who has a child protection concern. DLPs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies.
- Mandated Person refers to those designated in the Children First Act 2015 as mandated persons. Mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.
- Relevant Person refers to the person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Statutory Authorities These are An Garda Síochána and Child and Family Agency (Túsla). They are obliged under the law to investigate and assess in child abuse cases.

Recruitment of Workers and Volunteers

The Importance of Good Recruitment

For the most part, those who work with children work with integrity and honesty. However some people do use employment and volunteering to gain access to children in order to behave inappropriately.

Therefore;

- Good recruitment and selection processes will help screen and discourage those who are not suitable
- Parents will be assured that the appropriate measures have been taken to show that the church are committed to providing the best for their children

Advertising the position

All worker positions within the Church will be advertised in EAI forums, local and national press and on the church website.

All volunteer positions will be filled through the Youth Pastor approaching potential candidates from within the congregation of the Church and seeking them to apply for the position.

Defining the role

This involves thinking through what exactly the role of a new worker or volunteer is to be, and what skills will be required for him/her to perform effectively. Written job descriptions for employed workers are necessary and role descriptions, either written or vocal should be communicated to volunteers.

Application form

This should be supplied with a clear job/role description outlining what is expected of the worker if appropriate. This form allows potential church workers to provide all relevant details which must be treated confidentially. Volunteers should also be required to fill in application forms with the required details.

These forms can be found in the appendix.

Declaration

All applicants will be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children. All applicants are required to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them. Such information will be dealt with in a confidential manner and will not be used to discriminate against applicants unfairly. Only those applicants who formally express a willingness to undergo a vetting check should be interviewed. Medical history will also be asked.

Interview

All potential workers will be interviewed by a church panel with regards to their job. Those who will be volunteering should go through a less formal interview. These interviews should be used to explain their roles, ask questions on their history and so on and so forth.

Identification:

The potential workers/volunteers will be asked to provide two forms of identification along with their Garda Vetting Invitation form to confirm identity. Copies of these will be held by DEC on the individual's file.

References

References should be taken up with at least two people who are not family members and, ideally, one of whom should have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. References should be taken up in writing and should be followed up orally. These referee forms can be found in the appendix.

Garda vetting

Applicants deemed to be suitable at interview should be informed that they will be required to complete Garda vetting and asked to complete a Garda vetting invitation form (see Appendix). The Youth Pastor will forward the Garda vetting form to the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Volunteer Centre who will forward it to the National Vetting Bureau. The individual will receive an email from the National Vetting Bureau inviting them to fill in the on-line application for vetting. Once the vetting process has been completed by the National Vetting Bureau, DEC will receive a vetting disclosure for each individual from the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Volunteer Centre. Vetting disclosures will be assessed on an individual basis.

No worker or volunteer will be allowed to commence working with children until a vetting disclosure have been received in relation to that individual.

DEC shall ensure that all workers and volunteers are re-vetted every three years or sooner if they change roles within the Church.

Appointment

Following receipt of all the above forms, interview and receipt of Garda vetting the Youth Pastor will assess the suitability of paid and volunteer applicants and forward the names of the successful applicants to the Board of Directors for their appointment to be ratified.

Probationary period (workers) / trial period (volunteers)

All appointments should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work. Every new post should be reviewed within an agreed period of time - usually six months.

Workers from abroad

Background checks are not currently possible for many overseas workers and volunteers. When recruiting workers/volunteers who have come from abroad, certificates of good conduct can sometimes be obtained from the police or church leaders in their home church. However, these need to be treated with caution. As with any other criminal conviction certificate, it can only provide 'known' information. This information needs to be handled with care. What constitutes an offence in this State (and would be seen as child abuse) may not in the country from which the applicant originates. References therefore need to be viewed with this in mind. However, it is possible to complete Garda Vetting whilst resident in another country, this will check not only the Garda records but also Europol and Interpol records but will only show up convictions.

It is advisable to require candidates to sign a sworn declaration covering the period that they resided outside of Ireland to confirm that there is nothing (convictions or otherwise) in their background which would prevent them from working with children. This declaration form can be found in the appendix.

Young people under 18 years working with children

It is never appropriate to require someone aged less than 18 years to take on the role of leader or be in sole charge of children as this would mean leaving a child in charge of children. At least two adults should be in charge of any group of children.

Under 18s are assisting in order to gain expertise, citizenship development, personal or professional development and are not expected to take on the full range of duties of a worker or volunteer that is over 18.

Those aged 16 and 17 years should be asked to complete a Garda vetting invitation form and their parents to complete a Parental Consent Form for Garda Vetting (see appendix). Their Garda vetting should be received back from the National Vetting Bureau and their appointment as a Junior Leader ratified by the Board of Directors, prior to them commencing working with children. Under 16s currently do not currently require Garda vetting.

They must be provided with an appropriate form of training to cope with basic areas, such as bullying, shouting, physical contact, emergency procedures and first-aid policy. Such training must also include the need to safeguard themselves in situations where their actions may be misinterpreted.

When a Junior Leader turns 18 and is continuing to work with children, they must complete the rest of the recruitment process to become a Volunteer.

Support, Supervision and Training for Workers and Volunteers

New workers and volunteers should be provided with the Child Safeguarding Policy and have someone who knows it sit and talk it through with them. They should also complete introductory child protection training that includes basic awareness and understanding of child protection issues. The Youth Pastor shall maintain a record of what Child Safeguarding training DEC workers and volunteers have attended and ensure that workers and volunteers comply with the training requirements set out in the DEC Child Safeguarding Training Strategy.

Following appointment and completion of Child Protection training, new workers and volunteers will be required to sign up to the Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church Child Safeguarding policy and agree to uphold same in their post. This Declaration of Acceptance form can be found in the appendix.

It is the practice of some individual groups to develop an induction pack which is given to workers and volunteers following appointment.

It is good practice to set up a supervision system for workers and volunteers, which means arranging to see workers and volunteers at regular intervals whether on their own or in small groups. This provides support for workers and volunteers and an opportunity to talk through any questions or difficulties they may have. It also gives the supervisor(s) the opportunity to assess progress and whether any additional training should be provided.

Code of Behaviour

Codes of behaviour provide protection for everyone, including children, workers and volunteers. It is important that everyone involved has guidelines on what is expected, and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour. The code of behaviour for workers and volunteers will help to create a supportive environment to provide a child-centred approach for the children involved in the Church. The code of behaviour for children will help to provide a contract for the children to agree to and abide by.

Code of behaviour for workers and volunteers

The code of behaviour for workers and volunteers has been categorised under five headings:

- Child-centred approach;
- Best practice;
- Inappropriate behaviour;
- Physical contact;
- Health & Safety.

Child-centred approach

- Treat all children equally;
- Listen to and respect children;
- Involve children 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 as individuals;
- Respect a child's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and their parents/guardians;
- 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 other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, race and sexual orientation.

Good practice

- Ensure that a parental consent form is completed for each child on an annual basis (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);

- Make parents/guardians, children, and visitors aware of the Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all workers and volunteers aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Team and follow reporting procedures;
- Report to the Child Protection Team any concerns that they may have about a fellow worker's or volunteer's practice which may cause harm to a child or the reputation of the Church and complete an incident form
- Encourage children to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for workers and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep parents/guardians informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure any contact with children through social/digital media is in line with the procedures outlined in the Technology Policy.
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child and if you do then make sure that parents/guardians 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;
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Don't single out a particular child for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

Physical contact

- Seek consent of child in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;

- Check with children about their level of comfort when doing activities that might involve physical contact.

Health and safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment by abiding by the guidelines for general safety and management;
- Be aware of accident and incident procedure and follow accordingly.

Breaching the Code of Behaviour

Volunteers and workers should understand that:

- If they are unsure of their actions and feel that they may have breached the Code of Behaviour or feel that their actions may have been misconstrued, a report should be written and submitted immediately to the Youth Pastor and/or the Child Protection Team
- Breaching the Code of Behaviour may be a serious issue that will be investigated.
- Breaching the Code of Behaviour may result in disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal.

It is important that if a worker or volunteer has a concern about the behaviour of another worker or volunteer they should report these concerns to the Youth Pastor and/or Child Protection Team.

If the concern relates to a breach of the code of behaviour by a volunteer it shall be dealt with through complaints and disciplinary procedures, if the concern relates to a breach of the code of behaviour by a worker it shall be dealt with through the disciplinary procedures set out in the employee handbook.

However, if the concern relates to suspected or witnessed abuse, the matter will be dealt with through the procedures for dealing with an allegation against a volunteer or worker (see page 22).

Code of Behaviour for Children

For a code of behaviour to work best, children need to be able to develop the code for themselves, with the assistance of clergy/staff/volunteers.

Codes of behaviour have been shown to help children to develop their sense of fair play and mutual respect and will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can confide in the leaders. When children 'own' the code, they will generally protect and support it.

It is recommended that at the commencement of the group's year a code of behaviour be drawn up with the members' participation. While it is recognised that discipline may seem at times to be restrictive to children it is best enforced with their agreement and therefore the members should also be involved with deciding what sanctions should be associated with the code of behaviour.

An effective code of behaviour should contain the following elements:

- A description of the rights and responsibilities of all members of the group (i.e. respecting view and feelings of other members, right to express opinions, right to be heard/listened to)
- A description of the ways in which the group encourages and recognises good behaviour (i.e. reward system)
- A description of unacceptable/inappropriate behaviour (i.e. alcohol consumption, smoking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, destruction or damage of property or equipment, misuse of any substance)
- A description of what is acceptable in terms of use of mobile phones at activities.
- Mechanisms for achieving a supportive culture and positive environment (i.e. leaders willing to listen to children, involvement of children in decision making)
- Strategies to embrace diversity and difference within the group (i.e. respecting others' opinions, not excluding anyone)
- Strategies for the prevention of bullying and other serious misbehaviour and processes for managing conflict (see Anti-Bullying policy template)

Sanctions should contain the following elements:

- Issuing an apology
- Loss of privileges
- Parents/guardians being informed of the breach of code
- Leaving the group for a period and/or for good.

Once the Code of Behaviour and sanctions have been agreed by the members of the group, a copy of it should be issued to each child and their parents/guardians for them to sign.

Recognising and Responding to Child Welfare and Child Abuse Concerns

The Church must take all reasonable steps to:

- exclude known abusers
- report to the statutory authorities any suspicious person or known offender attempting to make contact with children
- report to the appropriate TÚSLA child and family services area when there is disclosure, concern or allegation of abuse arising from activities within the Church

Recognising Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, it should be considered child welfare and protection issue for both children and child protection procedures should be followed for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the parent/carer.

The definitions and signs of abuse outlined in the Appendices are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

In dealing with children, workers and volunteers need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come in contact with. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication

difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following are some of the complicating factors and circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm:

- Age of the child
- Domestic and sexual violence
- Parental mental health problems
- Parental substance misuse
- Parental intellectual disability
- Children with disabilities
- Unknown male partners and their history/association with the family
- Families who are 'uncooperative' or 'hard to engage'
- Poverty and social exclusion.

It is important to remember that identifying additional vulnerability does not mean that any specific child in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

Abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The reporting procedures set out on page 17 should always be used when a worker or volunteer has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. If what may be symptoms of abuse are ignored it could result in ongoing harm to the child. It is not necessary to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern, all that is required is that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

The guiding principles on reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made
2. Reports of concern should be made without delay to the Child Protection Team.

Responding to a child who discloses abuse

A child may disclose to a worker or volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child hints at or tells a worker or volunteer that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by a child (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

Remember, a child may disclose abuse to a worker or volunteer as a trusted adult at any time during their work with them. It is important that workers and volunteers are aware and prepared for this.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the child has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser whilst also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking to the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

When asking questions

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggestion that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such question and suggestions could complicate the official investigation.

Confidentiality – Do not promise to keep secrets

At the earliest opportunity, tell the child that:

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you.
- You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further on-going hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything (or, indeed, anything) there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell and lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time.

Think before you promise anything – do not make promises you cannot keep

At the earliest possible opportunity:

- Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child.
- Inform the Child Protection Team immediately and agree measure to protect the child, e.g. report the matter directly to Tusla.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Ongoing support

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that the worker or volunteer continues in a supportive relationship with the child. Disclosure is a huge step for a child. Workers and volunteers should continue to offer support, particularly by:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child
- Continuing to include the child in the usual activities.

Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as indicated above. Where necessary, immediate action should be taken to ensure the child's safety by making a written record of the further disclosure and reporting it to the Child Protection Team.

The Child Protection Team shall provide any necessary supports to the worker or volunteer where a report of a disclosure has been made to the Child Protection Team to assist all those involved to deal with the aftermath of making a report of a disclosure.

Reporting Procedures

A child will sometimes confide in a worker or volunteer that they have been abused or someone may witness incidents which suggest that a child is being harmed. Often it is a case of a worker or volunteer feeling worried and concerned about certain signs they are picking up on, such as poor hygiene; a child always appearing hungry, listless and tired; a lack of suitable clothing; or unexplained physical injuries. Other indicators may be related to the child's behaviour such as being aggressive, impulsive, or withdrawn. A cluster or pattern of signs is more likely to be indicative of abuse or neglect.

If a worker or volunteer has any of the above concerns or has seen or heard anything else which causes them concern about a child, they have a responsibility to safeguarding children and report those concerns by contacting a member of the Child Protection Team and completing the Internal Reporting Form giving as much detail as possible about the concern. The Internal Reporting Form should be returned as soon as possible to the Child Protection Team. It is important to note the report should be factual and include all details available to the worker or volunteer in relation to the child and their concerns.

The Child Protection Team shall provide any necessary supports to the worker or volunteer where a report of a concern or disclosure has been made to the Child Protection Team to assist all those involved to deal with the aftermath of making a report of a disclosure.

On receipt of any concern the Child Protection Team, in consultation with the worker or volunteer who raised the concern, will expediently assess the information and decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. In assessing any concerns or disclosures reported by workers or volunteers, the Child Protection Team should check their records to see if any other concerns have been raised previously in relation to this child. The Designated Liaison Person, as a mandated person, also has the responsibility to assess the information, in line with the Mandated Reporting Threshold Decision Process and decide whether the concern reaches or exceeds the threshold for harm to necessitate a mandated report. The concern raised must be assessed by the Child Protection Team in relation to both levels of report, if the

concern does not meet the threshold for harm but does meet the reasonable grounds for concern it should be reported. The Child Protection Team will make a record of their decision as to whether a report should be made and at what level and the basis for such decision.

The Child Protection Team should contact the parents/guardians and speak to them about the concern that has been raised in relation to their child and inform them that a report is being submitted to Tusla. This should be done in a sensitive and caring manner and should be done in line with the best practice guidelines contained in Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. However the Child Protection Team will not inform the parents of the decision to report a concern to Tusla, if they feel that by doing so might further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment or put themselves or the worker or volunteer at risk of harm.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist the Child Protection Team will, without delay, contact the Duty Social Worker at Tusla and make a verbal report and then complete the Child Protection and Welfare Report form on the Tusla Portal based on information held by Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church on the child in question and the information provided by the worker or volunteer on the Internal Reporting Form and forward same to Tusla. If concern meets or exceeds the threshold for harm, the Child Protection Team will indicate on the Child Protection and Welfare Report form that this is a mandated report.

If the Child Protection Team is unsure if the concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern or meets or exceeds the threshold of harm to warrant a mandated report, they should contact the Duty Social Worker at Tusla and seek advice as to whether a report should be made and at what level. Where the Duty Social Worker advises that the concern does not meet the reasonable grounds for concern, the Child Protection Team will inform the worker or volunteer of the advice received and advise the worker or volunteer to continue to monitor and support the child and if any further concerns arise to inform the Child Protection Team. A record of the initial concern will be placed in the Child Protection files of Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church by the Child Protection Team.

It is important that should future concerns be raised by a worker/volunteer in relation to the same child, the Child Protection Team should assess the information on all records held in the Child Protection file on that child, in addition to the new concern, when deciding whether reasonable grounds for concern are met or the threshold of harm is met or exceeded and a report to Tusla is needed.

If the Child Protection Team decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
- Any action taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
- The worker/volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
- The worker/volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochana personally.
- The worker/volunteer who raise the concern should also be reassured that if they do choose to further pursue the matter, they are covered by the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

In the event of an emergency, where it is considered that the child is in imminent danger, or the non-availability of a duty social worker, the Child Protection Team should report to An Garda Síochana.

If the Child Protection Team are not available and a worker/volunteer feels that the concern/disclosure/allegation cannot wait until the Child Protection Team can be contacted, the worker/volunteer should contact the duty social worker directly themselves and make a report. The worker/volunteer should advise the Child Protection Team that a report has been made.

The Child Protection Team should also consider if the concern should also be reported to An Garda Síochana in line with the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. Where the concern needs to be report to An Garda Síochana the Child Protection Team will support the originator of the report (volunteer or worker) to make such report to the Gardai to meet their legal obligations.

The Child Protection Team shall report to each meeting of the Board of Directors of DEC on Child Safeguarding matters without revealing any details of individual cases unless the situation so warrants.

Mandated Reporting and Assisting

In Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church there are a number of mandated persons who are required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concern that meets or exceeds the threshold for reporting under the legislation.

Where a mandated person has a concern that they believe that meets the threshold for a mandated report (as set out on page 20-22 of Children First), they should report the matter to the Child Protection Team and a joint mandated report be made to Tusla. The Child Protection Team cannot make the report independently of the mandated person as the mandated person must discharge their duty under the Children First Act 2015, the report can be made jointly to allow everyone discharge their duty.

Where a mandated person has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should report that concern to the Child Protection Team to allow them to consider whether the concerns meets reasonable grounds for concern and a non-mandated report needs to be made to Tusla.

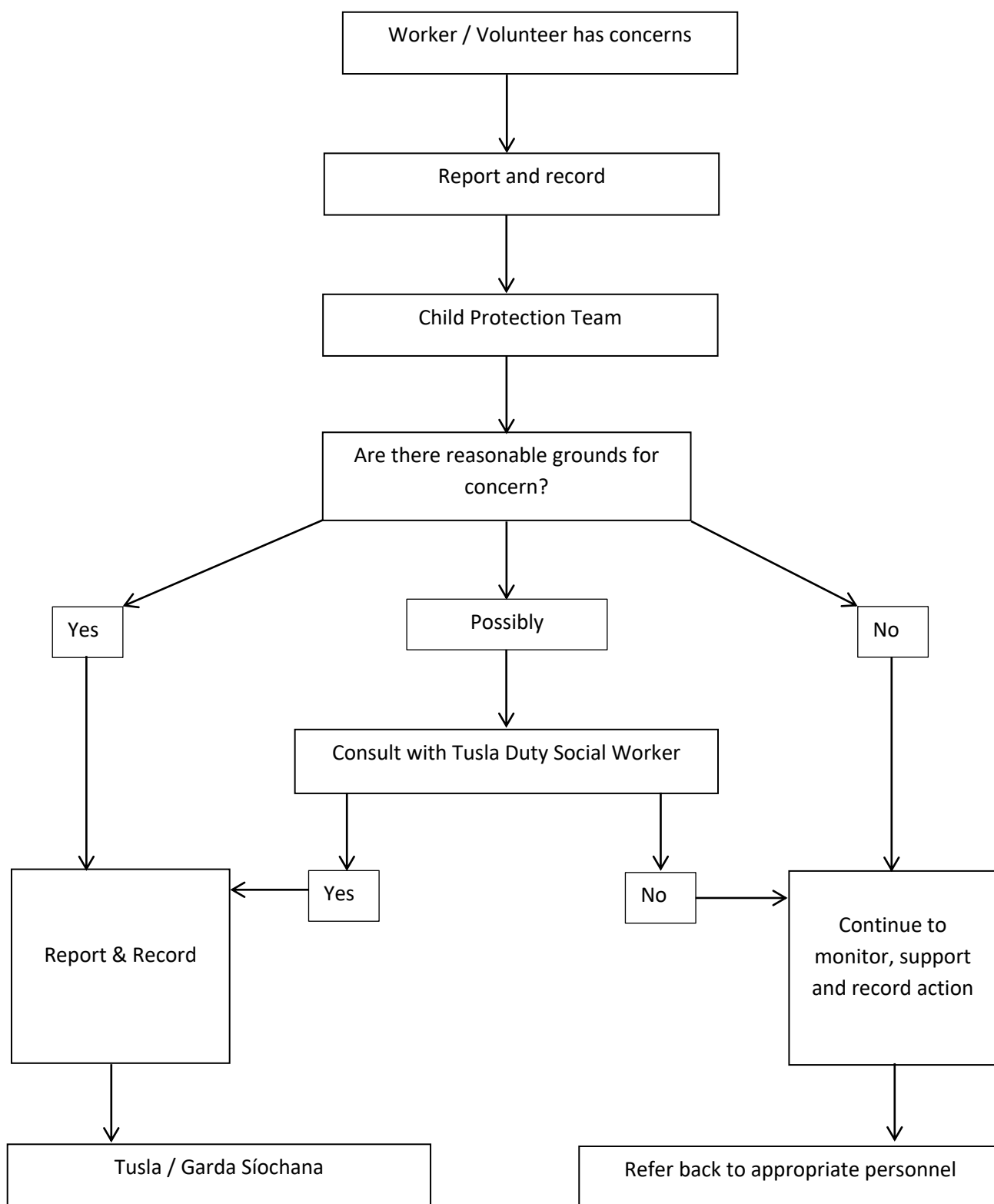
Under the Children First Act 2015 there is also a statutory requirement for mandated persons to assist Tusla in the assessment of risk of mandated reports, where requested to do so. Where such a request is received, the mandated person must provide such assistance as is required. Tusla accepts the time limitations and pressures on other professional and will use mandated assisting only when necessary and only to the extent needed by each specific case.

Anonymity

Designated Liaison Persons cannot report anonymously. Similarly, mandated persons may not report anonymously as to do so does not discharge the statutory obligations for a mandated person under the Children First Act 2015.

Tusla will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous as much as possible, but cannot give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The Data Protection Acts and Freedom of Information Acts allow the withholding of information in certain circumstances, however, should the information be directly sought within legal proceedings, there is no guarantee it will not be released.

Diagram of Reporting Procedures



Dealing with allegations

Allegation against a worker or volunteer

An allegation of abuse may relate to a worker or volunteer who works with children in Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk to a child
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church's Code of Behaviour for workers and volunteers.

If an allegation is made against a worker or volunteer, Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church has a dual responsibility in relation to the child and the worker/volunteer. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child and the alleged abuser;
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with the worker/volunteer.

On receipt of an allegation against a worker/volunteer, the Child Protection Team shall follow the reporting procedures laid out on page 17 and if making a formal report to Tusla advise them that the report is in relation to a worker/volunteer in the organisation. This will allow Tusla to apply the necessary policies and procedures in relation to allegations against workers or volunteers in organisations. In addition, they shall advise the Board of Directors that an allegation has been made against a worker/volunteer and the Board of Directors shall undertake the internal personnel procedure.

The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk and whilst Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church has a dual responsibility to the worker/volunteer and the child in this situation, the safety of all children in the church has to be the paramount consideration where such a situation arises. The Board of Directors should as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the worker/volunteer, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children. Where protective measures penalise the worker/volunteer, it is important that early consideration be given to the case.

Any action taken should be guided by agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice and the rights of the worker's/volunteer's, against who the allegation has been made, to a fair procedures in relation to the allegation and investigation.

The Board of Directors should privately inform the worker/volunteer of the following:
(i) the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her;

(ii) the nature of the allegation.

The worker/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Board of Directors should note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla. The worker/volunteer should be offered the option of have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.

The Board of Directors should take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations/ assessments conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. To this end it is strongly recommended that the Board of Directors maintain a close liaison with the statutory authorities to ensure this.

The requirements of fair procedure and natural justice mean that Tusla usually will not share the details of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a worker/volunteer until the worker/volunteer has had the opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions of Tusla

The Child Protection Team and the Board of Directors should be notified of the outcome of an investigation and/or assessment by Tusla. This will assist them in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the worker/volunteer.

Allegation against a child

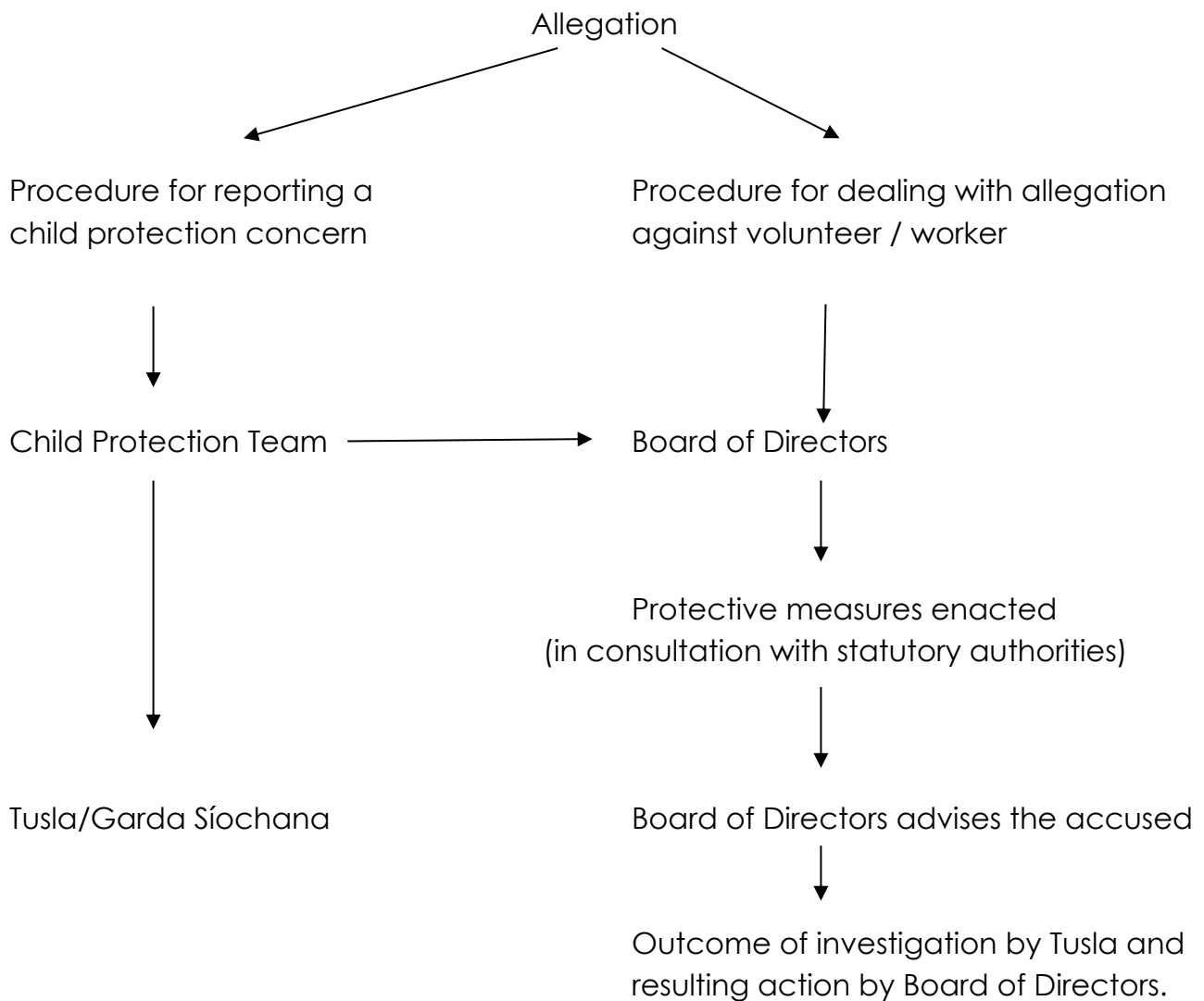
In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the standard reporting procedures (see page 17) will be followed. If an allegation, suspicion or concern of peer abuse is made against a child and meets the reasonable grounds for concern, this should be reported by the Child Protection Team indicating that it is a case of suspected peer abuse so that Tusla can put procedures in place for both the victim and the alleged abuser, as it would be considered a child protection and welfare issue for both children.

The Child Protection Team shall ensure that where both children are members of the Church that any necessary protective actions and proportionate measures are put in place for both child(ren) pending assessment investigation of the allegation.

If the allegation meets or exceeds the threshold of harm, the Child Protection Team should indicate on the report to Tusla that the report is a mandated report.

The Child Protection Team shall provide any necessary supports to the worker/volunteer, where a report of an allegation has been made to the Child Protection Team, to assist all those involved to deal with the aftermath of an allegation. The Child Protection Team/Board of Directors shall also provide advice to the particular children's activity as to support measure that should be put in place for the child who is the alleged victim.

Diagram of reporting procedure when dealing with an allegation against a worker or volunteer



Dealing with disclosure by an adult of childhood abuse

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure. This is important even where the children about whom there may be a concern are still to be identified.

Some adults disclosing abuse may not choose to personally come forward to report their concerns about children who may be currently at risk.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the Child Protection Team should be informed and they should follow the reporting procedures laid out on page 17 and report the allegation to Tusla without delay. The Retrospective Abuse Report Form on the Tusla portal should be used to make such a report to Tusla rather than the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.

If a worker or mandated person is unsure about whether to report or not, they should contact the Child Protection Team who can consult with the Tusla Duty Social Worker in relation to the concern and seek advice as to whether a report should be made or not.

Reports by adults of childhood abuse will be assessed by Tusla. If there are on-going child protection concerns Tusla will take necessary actions to ensure any child may be at risk of harm is protected.

Roles and Responsibilities

Child Protection Team

Cathy Cross and Sarah Davis have been appointed as the Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person respectively for Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church and shall be known collectively as the Child Protection Team.

It is the role and responsibility of the Designated Liaison Person to:

- Be fully familiar with Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church' duties to the safeguarding of children
- Have a good knowledge of Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church' guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church' reporting procedure is followed, so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from staff, volunteers and parents and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary.
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.
- Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochana, unless
 - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child;
 - Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
 - The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to your attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochana, as appropriate.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person role is to support the Designated Liaison Person and carry out the duties of the Designated Liaison Person when they are not available to do so.

Designated Liaison Person:	Cathy Cross	086 389 0303
	cathy@dec.ie	
Deputy Designated Liaison Person	Sarah Davis	

Mandated Persons

The Child Protection Team shall maintain a list of all mandated persons within Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church and will update this list every quarter.

The Designated Liaison Person as a mandated person shall make a mandated report to Tusla of any child protection or welfare concerns which meet or exceed the thresholds set out in Children First and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so. The Child Protection Team shall make a joint mandated report to Tusla along with another other mandated person in DEC who has a child protection or welfare concern which meets or exceeds the thresholds set out in Children First and cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

Whilst a number of volunteers within Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church would be mandated persons in their professional capacity, the legal obligation to report under the Children First Act only applies to information that they acquire in the course of their professional work or employment and does not apply to information they acquire outside of their professional capacity or information given to them on the basis of the personal relationship. Therefore they are not mandated persons in their capacity as volunteers within Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church.

Relevant Person

The Child Protection Team has been appointed as the relevant person for Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church and is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.

Record keeping, access and storage of information

Child Protection records

The Child Protection Team is responsible for keeping the following records relating to the Child Safeguarding Policy in a locked fire-proof filing cabinet.

- Any disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse.
- Records relating to disclosures, concerns or allegations of abuse including reports from workers/volunteers, reports to Tusla, including informal advice from the Tusla, informing parents/guardians, reports to Gardaí, advice given to workers/volunteers.
- Any complaints about the safety and welfare of children while under the supervision of Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church.
- Any protective measures or action taken by the Board of Directors in relation to an allegation against a worker/volunteer.
- Any actions taken by the Board of Directors in response to a complaint against a worker/volunteer

The Child Protection Team and the Youth Pastor are the only people who have access to these records.

The Child Protection Team will review all Child Protection records regularly and keep them updated. The Child Protection Team shall report to each meeting of the Board of Directors of DEC on Child Safeguarding matters without revealing any details of individual cases unless the situation so warrants.

All Child Protection records will be held by Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church in line with the DEC Data Processing Table.

Personnel records

Personnel records for all worker/volunteers including Application forms, Declaration Form, notes from interviews, Reference forms, Garda Vetting and Declaration of Acceptance shall be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet in the church office.

The Youth Pastor is the only person who will have access to these records. Individual workers or volunteers may request in writing to see the information held relating to them.

These records will be updated regularly with information from the support meetings held with workers and volunteers.

All personnel records will be held by Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church in line with the DEC Data Processing Table.

Organisation records

A Parental Consent form should be completed for each child at the beginning of each year providing personal details, any special needs, any medical conditions, emergency contact details, photograph consent.

An activity consent form should be completed for each child going on any outings or trips away.

Each group should maintain attendance records detailing the children and the workers and volunteers in attendance on a weekly basis.

All accidents and incidents will be recorded on the Accident/Incident Report form and submitted to the church office for filing in the locked filing cabinet.

The consent forms and attendance records for each group will be held in a dedicated drawer in a filing cabinet in the Church office for the period they pertain to and will be accessible to the Youth Pastor and the workers/volunteers in charge of each group. After that period the consent forms and attendance records will be transferred into the locked filing cabinet and the Youth Pastor will only have access to them.

All organisational records will be held by Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church in line with the DEC Data Processing Table.

Where Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church wishes to convert records from hard copy to digital copy the following steps should be taken:

1. The Board of Directors shall agree to the conversion of the records to digital format, what records shall be converted, who shall undertake this conversion and what time period of records shall be converted. These details shall be recorded in the Board of Directors minutes.
2. The relevant records shall then be scanned, and the digital copy stored in password protected files on either a password protected external hard drive or on a password protected cloud.
3. The external hard drive shall be stored in the locked fire proof filing cabinet used for Child Protection.
4. If using an external hard drive to store the data, a back-up of the external hard drive should be made on a second password protected external hard drive or to the cloud to ensure that the data on the external hard drive is not lost should the external hard drive become corrupted or is damaged. This second password protected external hard drive should be stored in a separate location (e.g. in the Rectory or by another panel member).
5. A check should be undertaken that all the information contained on the hard copy is legible on the digital copy and no document has been missed in conversion process before the hard copy records are shredded and destroyed.
6. Due to the length of time that certain records have to be kept it is essential that the digital records are migrated or converted as technology develops as the records need to remain accessible.
7. Additional records can be converted over time, but each time records are to be converted, this should be agreed by the Board of Directors as above.

Before commencing conversion of records from hard copy to digital copy, consideration must be given to the time it will take to convert the records, the cost factor (if any) and the ongoing responsibility of ensuring that the digitised records will remain accessible in light of technological advances.

Storage of information

Any data storage utilised by Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church shall:

- ensure that the basic principles of data protection are in place
- follow document procedures, for example with regard to accuracy, and have regular security reviews
- adhere to the 'need to know principle' - only personal data necessary for the purpose should be collected and workers/volunteers should only be able to access the personal data that they need to carry out their functions
- have adequate access controls, firewalls and virus protection if material is stored in electronic form
- keep manual files in locked cabinets with restricted access as detailed above.

NB The careful handling of information should not inhibit the availability of necessary information about children.

Data protection - GDPR

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 create obligations for those keeping personal information and gives individuals rights regarding information which concerns them.

Automated data means information that (a) is being processed by means of equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose, or (b) is recorded with the intention that it should be processed by means of such equipment. Manual data means information that is recorded as part of a relevant filing system or with the intention that it should form part of a relevant filing system.

The Data Protection Act 2003 extends the remit of data protection to manual searchable files, that is, information stored on paper, with effect from October 2007.

Details are to be found on www.dataprotection.ie the site of the Data Commissioner.

Information sharing

Good communication is good practice. If the church puts in place good systems and provides opportunities for sharing information with children, parents, workers/volunteers, everyone will feel that their input is valued and that their ideas and concerns will be listened to. A sense of partnership between parents, workers/volunteers and children will engender mutual trust.

To this end Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church has developed a Communications Policy and a Policy on Working in Partnership with Parents/Guardians.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.

Youth and children's ministry is based upon trusting relationships and the sharing by children to workers and volunteers of personal information and problems is not uncommon. Anyone, worker/volunteer/child, disclosing information in this context needs to know in advance the limits of confidentiality and the responsibilities attached.

In matters of child abuse a worker/volunteer can never promise to keep secret any information that is divulged. A worker/volunteer should explain to the child disclosing why s/he cannot keep this information secret and also explain to the child what h/she intends to do with the information. Every effort should be made to get the child to understand this strategy and consent to it. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved.

There is an obligation and duty on the person receiving this information to act in accordance with the Church's Child Safeguarding Policy.

All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse should be shared on a "*need to know basis*" in the best interest of the child. Sharing information with an appropriate / designated person (Child Protection Team, Tusla personnel or An Garda Síochana) for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

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

Guidelines for general safety and management

Responsibilities of the organisation leader

To ensure that the Church responds in a correct and prompt manner to accidents, or suspected child abuse, the worker/volunteer should ensure that:

- there are accident/incident report forms on the premises, or with the worker/volunteer
- he/she has immediate access to names, addresses and telephone numbers of the children attending the organisation
- there is access to a telephone in the event of an emergency
- all workers/volunteers are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an accident/incident
- all workers/volunteers are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an allegation of abuse
- he/she has a stock of internal reporting forms
- he/she is satisfied that all workers have a good understanding of the issues relating to confidentiality.

General safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. This is not only the responsibility of the worker/volunteer in charge of a group but of every worker/volunteer. A health and safety statement for the premises which sets out the safety procedures and identifies any hazards should be available.

All workers/volunteers are obliged to comply with the health and safety statement.

You should be aware of the following guidelines each time you use the premises.

a) Always have a quick initial look around the premises you are about to use to identify any possible dangers, e.g. a stack of chairs which could topple, an electric cable which could trip etc.

b) Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are not obstructed. Regular fire drills should be conducted to ensure that everyone knows what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. In the event of a fire, evacuating the building and saving life is much more important than fighting a fire.

The assembly point should be clearly identified.

c) Know where the nearest accessible telephone is. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes.

- d) If at all possible it is helpful to have someone with a first-aid qualification. Where possible workers/volunteers should be aware of what medication children are currently taking and this should not be given without written consent from parents or doctors. Workers/volunteers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods, e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of reach of children, and securely locked away.
- e) Children must be supervised by a worker/volunteer while in the kitchen area. Keep children out of the kitchen area other than when it is completely unavoidable.
- f) There should be adequate supervision by a worker/volunteer of certain equipment, e.g. table tennis tables, snooker tables etc.
- h) When using special equipment for your programme, e.g. for 'one off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle etc. ensure there is adequate supervision by trained workers. You may also require special insurance to cover these higher risk activities. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items which may cause injury.
- i) If the group is undertaking what is deemed to be high risk activities the worker/volunteer must seek written permission from parents/guardians in advance.
- j) Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used.
- k) Know where the first-aid provision is located.
- l) Know where the accident /incident report forms are kept on which you should record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date. Records of accidents/incidents should be kept in a secure child protection file.

Access to premises during activities

It is imperative that where children's activities are the only activity taking place in the Church that the front door is kept locked so that access is limited to those attending the children's activity and the workers and volunteers leading that group. If parents or others wish to gain access to the premises during these activities they should have to ring a door bell or utilise an intercom and a worker or volunteer should open the door to allow them access to the premises.

Where a children's activity is taking place at the same time as other activities are taking place, leaders should be aware of the other groups using the premises and the potential threats that this may entail. This may involve having extra workers or volunteers in place for these activities to monitor the door to the premises and supervise bathroom facilities.

It is essential that at the end of children's activities that children are handed over to the parents or the adult authorised to collect the children by a worker or volunteer. If a parent wishes for their child to walk home after a youth ministry activity, they should state this in writing to the worker or volunteer in charge of that group. .

Accidents and Incidents

In the event of an accident/incident, a worker/volunteer should administer any necessary first aid in the presence of another person. It is good practice to check the parental consent form for any allergies the child might have.

Workers/volunteers should use their discretion as to whether to inform parents of the accident/incident, immediately after it has happened or when they return to collect their child from the group activity. No child should go home after an accident without their parents being informed of the accident.

All facts relating to any accident or incident, contact details of all concerned and medical/other intervention (if such was necessary) should be accurately recorded on the accident/incident report form (see appendix). The completed accident/incident report form should be submitted to the church office for retention.

If an accident/incident occurs in premises other than that of Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church, the accident/incident should also be reported to the management of that premises.

Supervision

General principles

- Workers/volunteers in charge of group must be satisfied that those workers and volunteers who are working with their group are fully competent to do so.
- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Children must not be left unsupervised at any venue whether it be indoors or out of doors.
- Workers/volunteers should know at all times where children are and what they are doing.
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant worker/volunteer supervision.
- Children will be safer if supervised by two or more workers/volunteers.
- Dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed.
- Mixed groups must have both male and female workers/volunteers.

Supervision levels

Levels of supervision must be adequate whether at the Church's venue or on a journey/visit.

The minimum adult/child ratio for any group should be one adult per group of eight plus one other adult, and allowing an additional adult for each group of eight thereafter.

However, when deciding upon the adequate level of supervision for any group, workers/volunteers must take into consideration a range of practical matters:

- the number of participants in the group
- the nature of site/venue
- the activities to be undertaken (If the activity is one of a hazardous nature, e.g. mountain climbing, then there are specific ratios of workers to children which must be adhered to and this can be verified by contacting relevant sporting bodies.)
- the responsibilities he/she is expected to bear
- the experience or inexperience of the other workers/volunteers
- the ability/disability of the children in the group.

It is for the worker/volunteer in charge of a group to exercise his/her professional judgement in deciding the level of supervision taking into account the guidance as stated above.

Physical contact with children

- As a general principle workers/volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children. This is particularly the case with children of secondary school age and maturing children of primary school age.
- Physical contact which may be misinterpreted by a child, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well intentioned informal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm which if repeated with an individual child, could be misconstrued, as well as more obvious and more intimate contact which should never occur.
- There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Workers/volunteers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present to be, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time and never when alone with a child.
- Some workers/volunteers are likely to come into physical contact with children from time to time in the course of their activities, for example when showing a child how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during activities or sports. Workers/volunteers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the child.

- Workers/volunteers who have to administer first-aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances should be misconstrued.
- Following any incident where a worker/volunteer feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the person to whom he/she is accountable/reports. This would apply especially in a case where a worker/volunteer had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.
- Workers/volunteers should be particularly careful when supervising children in a residential setting, outdoor camp or extended visit away from home, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where workers/volunteers may be in proximity to children in circumstances very different from their usual environment.

Outings and Overnight Stays

Taking children on outings

It is good practice when organising journeys/visits/trips to adhere to, or remember, the following:

- The organisers of journeys/visits should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the children who are involved. This enables the children to know what will be happening as well as the parents.
- Workers/volunteers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children for the whole time they are away from home.
- Children should not be left to their own devices, e.g. in a town for the evening or on shopping expeditions.
- All children should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times. Each supervising adult should have a list of the children he/she will have charge of.
- Organisers should obtain, in writing, parental consent to children going on trips and permission to embark on whatever the trip may include
- Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children will be engaged and the supervision ratios.
- Adequate transport arrangements must be organised

Outings - important issues to consider:

- How old are the children - are they in a narrow age band, e.g. 3-5, 11-13 or a mixed age band?
- Do any have 'special needs' to be taken into account?
- What kinds of activities are being planned?
- Is there adequate and appropriate supervision?
- Ensure that all required medical information has been obtained

- Do any of the activities (e.g. outdoor activities, swimming) require workers/volunteers to have particular qualifications?

Other practical things to consider

- How near will you be to other adult help?
- Will anyone else be in the building?
- What is the layout of your building?
- Do you mainly use one room or are the activities held in several at the same time?
- What is the experience and training of adults who will be in charge especially in first-aid?
- Do any of the adults have special conditions that need to be taken into account?
- Adults who suffer from travel sickness are not the best workers/volunteers for coach parties!

Taking children on a residential

More comprehensive training must be undertaken by the workers well in advance of an outing or residential.

Transport

Work with children will involve transporting them at some stage, whether this is on a club night or to and from an outing or a residential programme.

Workers and volunteers should observe the following;

Private Cars

1. Drivers should be aware of the limitations of third party insurance for transporting children. Private cars can be used so long as they are not used for hire or for carrying passengers for reward.
2. Drivers must check with their insurance company regarding the adequacy of passenger liability.
3. Avoid transporting a child on your own. Try to ensure another worker/volunteer or other children are with you in the vehicle. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other workers/volunteers know this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.
4. Overcrowding must be avoided at all costs. This will invalidate any insurance cover provided. New EU Child Safety Protection Laws have come into force making it compulsory for all children to travel in the correct child seat, booster seat or booster cushion. Where safety belts have been fitted they must be worn.
5. Children under three years of age must not travel in a car or goods vehicle (other than a taxi) unless restrained in the correct child seat. Children aged three years or over who are under 150cm in height and weighing less than 36kg (i.e. generally children up to 11/12 years old) must use the correct child seat, booster seat or booster cushion when travelling in cars or goods vehicles.

6. Drivers have a legal responsibility to ensure passengers aged under 17 years use the correct seat, booster seat, booster cushion and / or seatbelt.
7. Only ever transport a child if you need to and if you have permission from parents/guardians.

Minibuses

1. All drivers for minibuses must have an appropriate licence.
2. If driving a church minibus, drivers must be named on the church insurance policy.
3. The law states that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition before use. Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident. Therefore, each driver must carry out a range of checks to ensure the roadworthiness of the vehicle. IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT DRIVE THE VEHICLE.
4. When hiring a minibus or larger bus, it is the responsibility of the user group to verify the legality and insurance cover of the operator prior to the use of the transport. If in doubt, ask to see a copy of the operator's insurance cover and licence. Also ask the operator to confirm that the driver has been Garda vetted.
5. It is now a legal requirement for appropriate seat belts or restraints to be provided in all minibuses and coaches. Seat belts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short, and again it is the driver's/worker/volunteer's responsibility to enforce this.
6. Workers/volunteers who accompany children in minibuses should, where possible, sit amongst them. Preferably, one worker/volunteer should sit near any exit points.
7. An accident report book/breakdown log book should be carried in church minibuses and kept up to date.
8. Carry a first-aid kit and fire extinguisher and familiarise yourself with their use.

Technology

In order to keep everyone (children, workers and volunteers safe when using technology either at or in relation to activities at DEC, a Technology Policy has been developed.

Children with Special Needs

Support for families of children with special needs

Parenting a child with special needs can be overwhelming at times. Parents may sometimes feel anger, fear, grief and fatigue while struggling to help their child. Sadly, the church has in the past been a place of frustration instead of sanctuary for some parents because of a lack of understanding by church members of the difficulties faced by families.

Talk with the parents, who will know what the child's needs are

Not only will this demonstrate to the child's family that the church is welcoming to children with special needs, but you may also be able to offer the family support if required.

Some children with special needs may require one-to-one help in church or a children's group. In these circumstances, look at introducing a 'buddy scheme'. It is important to understand that some children prefer to deal with one or two people whom they know than a number of different people. So bear this in mind if you run any scheme on a rota basis.

Buddy schemes

'Buddy' or befriending schemes usually operate with buddies being responsible for one or two children. The buddy always works with the same children which helps the child with consistency.

The buddy also befriends and supports the parents of the child.

Action points

Dos and **Don'ts** - general advice for all children with special needs. It is best to read these in conjunction with specific advice about different types of special needs.

Do

- View child first then disability e.g. "The child with Down's Syndrome" not "The Down's Syndrome child"
- Include (not just by enrolling a child into your programme or activity, but by including them in every aspect of what you say or do)
- Treat a child with special needs as you would any other child
- Always speak directly to the child with special needs
- Always ask the child with special needs if you can help him/her in any way
- Integrate the child into the group
- Be aware that inclusion in your group may be a child's first experience of being in a mixed group - make it a positive experience
- Try to be aware of a child's hidden disability or condition, such as epilepsy, which
 - may require assistance
- Use biblical teaching to show that we are all different yet all special to God
- When planning an event, ask advice from children with special needs and their parents or carers, and advertise accessibility
- Examine your use of derogatory language such as 'blind as a bat'
- Assume nothing - always ask! Talk to the parents or carers, and communicate with the child too!

Don't

- Exclude (this is demonstrated by your commitment to the child)
- Use negative terms such as 'crippled' or 'victim'
- Use language that promotes pity or charity

- Use emotionally loaded language such as 'suffers from', 'afflicted with', 'bound' or 'confined'
- Consider a parent or carer to be a conversational go-between
- Segregate
- Pretend that you know what children are saying when you cannot understand them - ask them to repeat themselves or try another method of communication
- Be embarrassed about using common expressions, for example saying 'see you later' when speaking to a child who is blind.

One to One Working

There are two main situations in which the need for one-to-one working may arise:

1. In a reactive situation, e.g. where a young person requests a one-on-one meeting without warning, or where a young person needs to be removed from a group;
2. As part of a planned structured piece of work.

The following offers some guidance in relation to these situations:

1. In a reactive situation:

- If you need to talk to a young person alone, try to do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- If this is not possible try to meet in rooms with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room/area where other people are nearby.
- Workers should advise another worker that such a meeting is taking place and the reason for it.
- A record should be kept of these meetings including names, dates, times, location, reason for the meeting and outcome.
- Workers are strongly advised against meetings with individual children where they are on their own in a building.
- One-to-one meetings should take place in an appropriate venue and at an appropriate time, e.g. not late at night.

2. As part of a planned and structured piece of work

- The particular programme/activity should have a clear rationale, aims, methodology, evaluation mechanism and accompanying work plan.
- A good supervision structure should be in place to support this work and address any issues which may arise.
- Parents/guardians must be fully informed as to the nature and purpose of this work and must give written consent.
- Maintain a register for safety. For example: name, address, phone, any specific needs, attendance, emergency contact.
- A clear code of behaviour must be agreed and adhered to for both worker and young person.

Interagency Work

Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church's Child Protection and Welfare policy covers all Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church activities at their premises in Dun Laoghaire and at other venues within the Republic of Ireland and Internationally.

It is important to ensure that where Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church activities are happening in conjunction with another group or organisation protocols are put in place to ensure that there is clarity for all those involved.

Where Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church are using or hiring premises for activities, the Church should comply with any requirements such as providing a copy of insurance and Child Safeguarding Policy. The Child Safeguarding Policy of any premises will not supersede Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church's Child Safeguarding Policy.

Where Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church is working with another organisation or agency on a joint activity, the organising committee should agree with the other organisation/agency at the planning stages which organisation's/agency's insurance is going to be used to cover the event and which organisation's/agency's Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures will be followed.

Appendices

The final section of the document is additional information in relation to Child Protection and Welfare and a collection of forms that will be used to gain data from workers, volunteers and children.

Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church Contact Details

Parental Consent Form

Volunteer Application Form

Workers/Volunteers Declaration Form

Workers/Volunteers Reference Form

Garda Vetting Form

Garda Vetting Parental Consent Form

Declaration by Worker/Volunteer from Abroad

Declaration of Acceptance

Accident / Incident Report Form

Definitions and Signs of Abuse

Relevant Legislation

Internal Reporting Form

National Contacts for TÚSLA Social Workers

NB- consent forms for one off activities such as outings; weekend residential etc. will be devised closer to the time of the event. These will be made in collaboration with everything in this statement.

Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church's Contact Details

Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church

Phone- 086 389 0303

Email- info@dec.ie

Church Child Protection Team

Cathy Cross- 086 389 0303

Email- cathy@dec.ie

Sarah Davis

Youth Pastor- Darren Mooney

Phone- 086 833 5970

Email - darren@dec.ie



Anything that is written on this form will be held in confidence. We need to know this information to meet your child's requirements and to ensure that they are in as safe an environment as possible.

Please read this form carefully and fill in all sections. Complete one form per child and tick the appropriate box for the programmes that your child attends.

<u>Programme/s</u>	Tick
Youth Fellowship	
Lighthouse	
Explorers	

Child's First name _____

Child's Surname _____

Parent/Guardian's Name _____ Home Telephone Number _____

Address _____

Child's Email (optional) _____

Child's Mobile Telephone number (optional) _____ School year _____ DOB- __/__/__

Contacts

Emergency Contact 1 _____ Relationship to child _____

Telephone Number _____ Mobile _____

Darren Mooney- Youth Pastor

darren@dec.ie

0868335970

Address _____

Emergency Contact 2 _____ Relationship to child _____

Telephone Number _____ Mobile _____

Address _____

Details of any medical conditions, allergies (e.g.- asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc) _____

Please indicate what symptoms will be displayed relevant to any allergies or condition and how best to respond to these symptoms: _____

Any medication that may need to be administered and is the child able to do that themselves? _____

Any other needs that the leaders need to be made aware of? _____

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS: during the year photos/videos maybe taken of your child connected with the activities that they attend. These may be used for feedback within the church, church website, brochures or other church material

(Tick the appropriate)

I give permission for photographs to be taken for the above purposes

☐

I don't give permission

☐

Do you give permission for your child to be contacted via text messages, emails, Facebook regarding DEC youth programmes? (Circle option) Yes No

Their welfare and safety of children and young people in our care is of paramount importance to DEC. The steps and procedures that we take in order to do this are taken in compliance with our Child Safeguarding Policy which was last updated in July 2019. This policy is available to be seen on our website (www.dec.ie).

I give permission for my child to attend all of the organisations ticked above and to participate in all their activities.

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs.

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered when considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, and/or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the above details are correct.

Parent/Guardian's name printed in full: _____

Signature: _____ (Parent/Guardian) Date: _____

I will notify the DEC immediately of any changes to the information provided on this form.

In line with Data Protection regulations, we are committed to protecting the personal information given on this form. By providing the information requested, you are giving us permission (consent) to use this information for Safeguarding, legal or regulatory purposes and we will use it for no other purpose without further consent unless mandated or required to do so under the Data Protection Act or equivalent legislation. If you have any questions about how we process your personal data, please contact Cathy Cross.

Volunteer Application Form

Confidential

Surname _____

Forename _____

Address _____

Date of birth: _____ Tel No. _____

Are you (please tick)

Employed____ Unemployed____ Student____ Homemaker____ Other

Previous work experience-

(Highlight any experience of working with children)

Why do you want to work with children?

Have you been involved in voluntary work previously? Yes____ No____

If yes, give details

Do you have any spare time hobbies, interests or activities?

Any other relevant information?

Please provide names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not a relative or a member of your family)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____

Email: _____

I consent to contact being made with the person listed as referees above and to discussion of their knowledge of my background and any other relevant matters taking place.

I confirm that I have read and agree to the Volunteer Privacy Policy which has been provided to me.

DECLARATION

I consent to Garda vetting being undertaken for the role for which I have applied.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or bound over order? YES NO

If yes, please list below the nature and date(s) of offences.

Nature of offence

Date

I confirm that there is nothing in my personal or professional background deems me unsuitable for a post which involves working with children.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

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VOLUNTEER PRIVACY NOTICE**What is the purpose of this document?**

We are a "data controller". This means that we are responsible for deciding how we hold and use personal information about you. You are being sent a copy of this privacy notice because you are applying to work with us as a volunteer. It makes you aware of how and why your personal data will be used, namely for the purposes of the recruitment exercise, and how long it will usually be retained for. It provides you with certain information that must be provided under the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (GDPR).

Data protection principles

We will comply with data protection law and principles, which means that your data will be:

- Used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way.
- Collected only for valid purposes that we have clearly explained to you and not used in any way that is incompatible with those purposes.
- Relevant to the purposes we have told you about and limited only to those purposes.
- Accurate and kept up to date.
- Kept only as long as necessary for the purposes we have told you about.
- Kept securely.

The kind of information we hold about you

In connection with your application to volunteer with us, we will collect, store, and use the following categories of personal information about you:

- The information you have provided to us in any curriculum vitae and/or covering letter or in any other context.
- The information you have provided on our application form, including name, title, address, telephone number, personal email address, date of birth, gender, employment history, qualifications.
- Any information you provide to us during an interview.
- We may also collect, store and use the following types of more sensitive personal information:
- Information about criminal convictions and offences.

How is your personal information collected?

We collect personal information about candidates from the following sources:

- You, the candidate to volunteer.
- An Garda Síochána, in respect of Garda vetting disclosure and any other equivalent authority (such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland) from which criminal record check are deemed necessary.
- Your named referees.
- Any data from third parties which is available from a publicly accessible source.

How we will use information about you

We will use the personal information we collect about you to:

- Assess your skills, qualifications, and suitability for the work or role for which you have applied.
- Carry out background and reference checks, where applicable.
- Communicate with you about the recruitment process.
- Keep records related to our hiring processes.
- Comply with legal or regulatory requirements.

It is in our legitimate interests to decide whether to allow you become a volunteer. We also need to process your personal information to decide whether to allow you do so.

In particular, we will take up references and/or contact your referees and carry out a Garda vetting check or other equivalent criminal record check as part of your application.

If you fail to provide personal information

If you fail to provide information when requested, which is necessary for us to consider your application (such as evidence of qualifications or work history), we will not be able to process your application successfully. For example, if we require references for this role and you fail to provide us with relevant details, we will not be able to take your application further.

Information about criminal convictions

We envisage that we will process information about criminal convictions.

We will collect information about your criminal convictions history. We are required to carry out a criminal records check in order to satisfy ourselves that there is nothing in your criminal convictions history which makes you unsuitable for the volunteering role. In particular:

- We are legally required by the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to do so.
- The volunteering role requires a high degree of trust and integrity since it involves working with children.

We have in place an appropriate policy document and safeguards which we are required by law to maintain when processing such data.

Automated decision-making

You will not be subject to decisions that will have a significant impact on you based solely on automated decision-making.

Data sharing

Why might you share my personal information with third parties?

We will only share your personal information with the following third parties for the purposes of processing your application: other Church of Ireland bodies or entities and An Garda Síochána or any other entity from which criminal conviction or background checks are obtained.

Data security

We have put in place appropriate security measures to prevent your personal information from being accidentally lost, used or accessed in an unauthorised way, altered or disclosed. We have put in place procedures to deal with any suspected data security breach and will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected breach where we are legally required to do so.

Your rights in connection with personal information

Under certain circumstances, by law you have the right to:

Request access to your personal information (commonly known as a "data subject access request"). This enables you to receive a copy of the personal information we hold about you and to check that we are lawfully processing it.

Request correction of the personal information that we hold about you. This enables you to have any incomplete or inaccurate information we hold about you corrected.

Request erasure of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to delete or remove personal information where there is no good reason for us continuing to process it. You also have the right to ask us to delete or remove your personal information where you have exercised your right to object to processing (see below).

Object to processing of your personal information where we are relying on a legitimate interest (or those of a third party) and there is something about your particular situation which makes you want to object to processing on this ground. You also have the right to object where we are processing your personal information for direct marketing purposes.

Request the restriction of processing of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to suspend the processing of personal information about you, for example if you want us to establish its accuracy or the reason for processing it.

Request the transfer of your personal information to another party.

If you want to review, verify, correct or request erasure of your personal information, object to the processing of your personal data, or request that we transfer a copy of your personal information to another party, please contact our Data Protection Officer in writing.

Data protection officer

We have appointed a data protection officer (DPO) to oversee compliance with this privacy notice. If you have any questions about this privacy notice or how we handle your personal information, please contact the DPO.

I, _____ (volunteer candidate name), acknowledge that on _____ (date), I received a copy of this Privacy Notice and that I have read and understood it.

Signature:.....

Name:

Worker/Volunteer Reference Form

Confidential

_____ Has applied for a position with Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church and has given your name as a referee.

This post/volunteer work 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?

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 position. We would appreciate you being 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 suitable for working with children?

How would you describe their personality?

Please rate this person on the following (please tick)

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Ability to work positively with children					
Ability to work with colleagues					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed: _____

Date: _____ Occupation: _____

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Guidelines for completing Paper Vetting Invitation Form

Please read the following guidelines before completing this form.

Miscellaneous

The Form must be completed in full using **BLOCK CAPITALS** and writing must be clear and legible.

The Form should be completed in ball point pen.

Photocopies will not be accepted, you must return a signed form.

All applicants will be required to provide documents to validate their identity.

If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a completed NVB 3 - Parent\Guardian Consent Form will be required.

Personal Details

Insert details for each field, allowing one block letter per box.

For Date of Birth field, allow one digit per box.

Please fill in your Email Address, allowing one character/symbol per box.

Please allow one digit per box for your contact number.

The Current Address means the address you are now living at.

The address fields should be completed in full, including Eircode/Postcode. No abbreviations.

Role Being Vetted For

The role being applied for must be clearly stated. Generic terms such as “Volunteer” will not suffice.

Declaration of Application

The applicant must confirm their understanding and acceptance of the two statements by signing the application form at Section 2 and ticking the box provided.

The affiliate is required to retain this form along with two photocopies of ID on file for the duration of time that the vetting subject is engaged with the organisation.

DECLARATION BY WORKER/VOLUNTEER FROM ABROAD

1. **Whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere**, have you ever been investigated in respect of or charged with or convicted of a criminal offence or have you ever been the subject of a court order binding you over to keep the peace or have you ever been subject to criminal proceedings in which the court has found the charge or charges against you to have been proved but in respect of which the Probation Act (or any foreign equivalent thereof) has been applied, or are you at present subject to any criminal charges or criminal investigation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

2. Have you ever committed any criminal act or been engaged in any criminal conduct for which you have not been prosecuted, whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

3. Has any court in your present or any other jurisdiction ever found you liable for a civil offence?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

4. Have you been placed on a sex offenders' register **in your present or any other jurisdiction**?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

I the undersigned, who have applied to work as:

.....

*****write in this space the actual office/position for which you are applying***

do hereby certify and warrant that in completing this form and in furnishing all the information contained herein or attached hereto, I am doing so in good faith and I further certify and warrant that all such information is true and accurate and constitutes a full disclosure of all material facts known to me.

Signed.....

Full name (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

Date.....

When completed and signed, return this form to:

In line with Data Protection regulations, we are committed to protecting the personal information given on this form. By providing the information requested, you are giving us permission (consent) to use this information for Safeguarding, legal or regulatory purposes and we will use it for no other purpose without further consent unless mandated or required to do so under the Data Protection Act or equivalent legislation. If you have any questions about how we process your personal data, please contact Cathy Cross

**DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE
OF *DUN LAOGHAIRE EVANGELICAL CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION
AND WELFARE POLICY*
AND A “DUTY OF CARE”**

Declaration

I have attended a training event which has introduced me to the Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church Child Protection and Welfare Policy and the recommended procedures to be followed when working with children have been explained to me.

I acknowledge receipt of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy and declare I will uphold the same in the position I have accepted with Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church.

I further state that I shall exercise a duty of care for any children in my charge.

Name (*print*)

Signed

Date.....

NB This declaration is to be retained by the Youth Pastor.

In line with Data Protection regulations, we are committed to protecting the personal information given on this form. By providing the information requested, you are giving us permission (consent) to use this information for Safeguarding, legal or regulatory purposes and we will use it for no other purpose without further consent unless mandated or required to do so under the Data Protection Act or equivalent legislation. If you have any questions about how we process your personal data, please contact Cathy Cross.

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name of person in charge of class: _____

Where incident/accident took place

Date of incident/accident _____

Name of injured person: _____

Address of injured person: _____




Nature of incident/injury and extent of injury

Give details of how and precisely where the incident took place.

Describe what activity was taking place, for example during class/getting changed.

Give full details of action taken during any first aid treatment and the name(s) of first-aider(s).

Were any of the following contacted?

 Parents/carers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
 Police	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
 Ambulance	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

What happened to the injured person following the incident/accident?

E.g., carried on with session, went home, went to hospital etc.

All of the above facts are a true record of the accident/incident

Signed: _____ Date: _____

DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

NEGLECT

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influences in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child one.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. A child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions - unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationships between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for

attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. Fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. Frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviour or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. Locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health or development is, or may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling

- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common laws defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a child may be sexual abuse even if the child concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purposes of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]

- Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
- Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not be regarded as child sexual abuse.

Welfare

The Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook defines a child welfare concern as "a problem experienced directly by a child, or the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare, and that warrants assessment and support, but may not require a child protection response".

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that relate to child welfare and protection. The information here gives a brief overview of relevant legislation.

CHILD CARE ACT 1991

This is a key piece of legislation which regulates child care policy in Ireland. Under this Act, Tusla has a statutory responsibility to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. If it is found that a child is not receiving adequate care and protection, Tusla has a duty to take appropriate action to promote the welfare of the child. This may include supporting families in need of assistance in providing care and protection to their children. The Child Care Act also sets out the statutory framework for taking children into care, if necessary.

PROTECTION FOR PERSONS REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ACT 1998

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (TÚSLA) or to members of the Gardai as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the TÚSLA who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency (www.tusla.ie and www.Túsla.ie).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 2006

Section 176 of this Act created an offence of reckless endangerment of children. This offence may be committed by a person who had authority or control over a child or abuser who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

1. Causing or permitting the child to be placed or left in a situation that creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse; or
2. Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE (WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION ON OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACT 2012

Under this Act, it is a criminal offence to withhold information about a serious offence, including sexual offence, against a person under 18 years or a vulnerable person. The offence arises where a person knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person and he or she has information which would help arrest, prosecute or convict another person for

that offence, but fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information, as soon as it is practicable to do so, to a member of An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Withholding legislation are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015.

NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU (CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACTS 2012-2016

Under these Acts, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with their provisions. Statutory obligations on employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for persons working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015

The Children First Act 2015 is an important addition to the child welfare and protection system as it will help to ensure that child protection concerns are brought to the attention of Tusla without delay.

The Act provides for mandatory reporting of child welfare and protection concerns by key professionals; comprehensive risk assessment and planning for a strong organisational culture of safeguarding in all services provided to children; provision for a register of non-compliance; and the statutory underpinning of the existing Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group which promotes and oversees cross-sectoral implementation and compliance with Children First.

CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES) ACT 2017

This Act addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It also creates offences of the types of activity which may occur during the early states of the predatory process prior to the actual exploitation of a child, for example, using modern technology to prey on children and making arrangements to meet with a child where the intention is to sexually exploit the child. The Act also recognises the existence of underage, consensual peer relationships where any sexual activity falls within the strictly defined age limits and the relationship is not intimidatory or exploitative.

Internal Reporting Form

To be filled out by worker /volunteer in the event of an alleged or suspected abusive situation

Date : _____ Time: _____

Name of Person Reporting: _____

Name of child involved _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Parents/Guardians Name(s): _____

Address (if different from above): _____

Contact telephone number: _____

Name of person allegedly causing concern: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Describe the incident or situation, which is causing concern

Source of information (i.e. child, adult, injury/distress noticed):

Any explanation offered to account for injury / distress etc: _____

Child's own statement (if relevant)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form should be completed with as much detail as is known and returned marked "Confidential" to the Child Protection Team. Continue on a blank sheet where appropriate.

National contacts for Tusla Social Workers

Area	Address	Telephone No.
DUBLIN NORTH	Child and Family Agency, 180 – 189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, County Dublin	(01) 8708000
DUBLIN NORTH CITY	Child and Family Agency, Health Centre, Wellmount Park, Finglas, Dublin 11	(01) 8567704
DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL	Child and Family Agency, Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	(01) 7955749
DUBLIN SOUTH EAST	Child and Family Agency, Unit 9 Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14	(01) 9213400
DUBLIN SOUTH WEST	Child and Family Agency, Building 2 Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Road, Naas, County Kildare	(045) 839300
CARLOW	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, County Tipperary	(052) 6177302
CAVAN	Child and Family Agency, Support Services Building, Rooskey, Monaghan	(047) 30475
WEST CAVAN	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	(071) 9155133
CLARE	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 588688
CORK	Child and Family Agency, Block 36, St Finbarr's Campus, Douglas Road, Cork, Co. Cork	(021) 4923493
DONEGAL	Child and Family Agency, Ground Level, Scally Place, Justice Walsh Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal	(074) 9123672
GALWAY	Child and Family Agency, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway, Co. Galway	(091) 546235
KERRY	Child and Family Agency, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry	(066) 7184501
KILDARE	Child and Family Agency, Building 2, Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Road, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 839300
KILKENNY	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.	(052) 6177302
LIMERICK	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Co. Limerick	(061) 588688
LAOIS	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997
LEITRIM	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	(071) 9155133

LONGFORD	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997
LOUTH	Child and Family Agency, Meath Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, Co. Meath	(046 9098560
MAYO	Child and Family Agency, 1 st Floor, Mill Lane, Bridge Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	(094) 9049137
MEATH	Child and Family Agency, Meath Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, County Meath	(046) 9098560
MONAGHAN	Child and Family Agency, Support Services Buidling, Rooskey, Monaghan	(049) 4369800
OFFALY	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997
ROSCOMMON	Child and Family Agency, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway	(091) 546235
SLIGO	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo	(071) 9155133
NORTH TIPPERARY	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3 St Cammillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 588688
SOUTH TIPPERARY	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	(052) 6177302
WATERFORD	Child and Family Agency, Ely house, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford	(053) 9185680
WESTMEATH	Social Work Department, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	(0906) 48 3106
WEXFORD	Child and Family Agency, Ely House, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford	(053) 9185680
WICKLOW	Child and Family Agency, Unit 9, Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14	(01) 9213400
WEST WICKLOW	Child and Family Agency, St Mary's, Craddockstown Road, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 882400

