



CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Little Learners Creche

July 2021

Checklist

Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement	Complete
Carry out the Risk Assessment	
List details of the service provided and management structure	
List principles to protect children from harm	
Appoint a Relevant Person	
Draw up a list of Mandated Persons	
Check you have all the required policies and procedures	
Amend your child protection and welfare reporting procedures, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>information on Mandated Persons and how they report</i> • <i>information from Children First, National Guidance, 2017</i> 	
Develop new procedures to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Appoint a relevant person</i> • <i>Draw up list of Mandated Persons</i> 	
Provide all staff and board members with information about their responsibilities under the Children First Act, 2015	
Include details on review and implementation	

Children First Act 2015 states that all early years services (including stand-alone afterschool services) as defined in the Childcare Act 1991 who employ one or more person are required to have a Child safeguarding Statement. Employ here includes people who are unpaid – for example, students or volunteers and back up persons.

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Dublin Adult Learning Centre Little Learners Crèche is registered pre-school providing the following services for children aged 1 to 5 years:

The management structure is: Mary Maher Director

Caroline Fitzgerald Crèche Manager

2. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

- Little Learners is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop.
- Our service believes that the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount. We are committed to child-centred practice in all our work with children.
- We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to, and heard.
- Our policy and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, DCYA, 2017, *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure*, Tusla, 2018, and the *Children First Act 2015*.
- Our policy declaration applies to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/ board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration and our child safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures.
- We will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every 2 years or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
- **Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection**

DLP: Mary Maher Director 3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1 018787266 marymaher@dalc.ie	Deputy: Caroline Fitzgerald 3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1 018787266 littlelearners@dalc.ie
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3. RISK ASSESSMENT

In accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, Little Learners continually has carries out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the service or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:

Risk Identified	Policies and/or Procedures in place to manage Risk

4. CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As required by the *Children First Act 2015* and *Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017* the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place in Little Learners:

- Procedure to maintain a list of mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015
- A Designated Liaison Person and Deputy have been appointed.
- Confidentiality Policy
- Child and Adult Protection Policy and Procedure
- Recruitment Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Induction Policy

- All staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – *Introduction to Children First* and have attended Always Children First Child Protection Training.
- Staff have access to regular Supervision and Support in line with the service policy.
- Complaints Policy
- Outings Policy
- Accidents and Incidents Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Collection Policy

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Little Learners is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.
- This Statement will be reviewed every 2 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
- This statement has been published and displayed in the service. It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with the service. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Service Provider's name and contact details:

For further information on this Statement, contact Relevant Person: Caroline Fitzgerald carolinedalc1@gmail.com

RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Person(s) carrying out Risk Assessment:

Date:

Risk Identified	Who is Responsible?	What is Currently in Place to Manage the Risk	What Future Actions are Needed?

Child Protection

1.1 Child Protection & Welfare Statement

In Little Learners Creche the welfare of the children in our care is of paramount importance.

We are committed to child centred practice in all our work with children and full compliance with *Children First, National Guidance, 2017*, Children First Act 2015, Child Protection & Welfare Practice Handbook 2011 and Our Duty to Care 2002. We recognise the right of children to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them.

Management, staff, volunteers and students in this service recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and our service will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Making sure that our staff and students are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Staff have undergone training on Child Protection and Welfare Policy.
- Ensuring all staff are Garda vetted prior to starting in our service.
- Having clear codes of behaviour for management, staff and students.
- Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents.
- Having a confidentiality policy.
- Having a recruitment procedure
- Sharing our safeguarding statement with families and children on the notice board outside the office.
- Working and cooperating with the relevant statutory agencies as required.
- As part of the policy the Designated Liaison Person for dealing with child protection concerns in Little Learners is Caroline Fitzgerald.
- The child protection policy will be shared with parents on enrolment with our service.
- This policy will be reviewed each time an incident is reported or every 2 years by management, Little Learners Creche staff and parents.

1.2 Overall Responsibility of all Employees, Board Members, Volunteers and Students

Although the Designated Liaison Person has a lead on issues relating to the protection and welfare of children, it is the responsibility of all service personnel to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children in the care of the service. All staff, management, board members, relief staff and volunteers are required to read, understand and sign off on the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. It is expected that if staff, board members or volunteers have any questions about the policy or its implementation they speak with the Designated Liaison Person.

We will ensure that all personnel:

Are aware of their responsibilities and their obligations under Children First.

Are aware of their responsibilities for reporting concerns and/or incidents regarding the safety or well-being of children to the Designated Liaison Person

Attend child protection training as appropriate.

This policy is always applicable when children are in the care of the service, including on day trips and outings. We will ensure this policy is observed by:

- Staff
- Board of Management Volunteers
- Students on placement
- Visitors to the service
- Children (depending on the age)

1.3 Definition of a Child For the purpose of this policy, a ‘child’ means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

2. Role of the Designated Liaison Person

Children First requires that every organisation providing services to children appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for reporting neglect or abuse. The DLP is responsible for dealing with child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with Children First and Our Duty to Care.

Designated liaison Person	Deputy Designated liaison Person
Caroline Fitzgerald	Angela Stokes

The Role of the DLP is to:

- Provide information and advice on child protection and welfare concerns and issues to the staff of the service
- Be accessible to all staff.

- Ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments.
- Ensure that the Child Protection and Welfare Policy and procedures of the service are followed.
- Be responsible for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of children to TUSLA
 - Child & Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána
- Ensure that appropriate information is included in the report to the Child & Family Agency and that the reported is submitted in writing using the Standard Report form
- Liaise with the Child & Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate
- Keep relevant people within the organisation informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the service, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
- Advise the organisation of child protection training needs.
- Maintain a central log or record of all child protection and welfare concerns in the service.

Community Services/Services with a Voluntary Management Committee:

The DLP is appointed by the management committee. In general, it is the manager who is the DLP.

3. Recognising, Responding and Reporting Concerns about a Child's Welfare or Possible Abuse

3.1 Recognising Concerns.

- Staff and/or volunteers may at times be concerned about the general welfare and development of children they work with, and they can discuss any concerns with their manager and/or Designated Liaison Person at any time.
- All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in Children First and the signs and symptoms of abuse.

Recognising Child Abuse:

Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children There are four principal types of child abuse as follows:

- Neglect: An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults, medical care Children First 2.2.1
- Emotional Abuse: When a child's need for affection, approval, consistency, and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child Children First 2.3.1

- Physical Abuse: Any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child Children First 2.4.1
- Sexual Abuse: When a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others Children First 2.5.1

In accordance with Children First:

- Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect.
- The Child and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.
- Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.
- A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the Child and Family Agency.

3.2 A concern could come to your attention in a number of ways:

- A child tells you or indicates that she/he is being abused. This is called a disclosure for guidance on responding to a disclosure from a child)
- An admission or indication from the alleged abuser
- A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable.
- Information from someone who saw the child being abused.
- Evidence of an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way.
- Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but an innocent explanation.

3.3 Procedures for Responding to a Child Protection or Welfare Concern

- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending Child & Family Agency intervention. In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána
- If the child has made a disclosure, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern the DLP will complete the Standard Report Form without delay and send it to the Duty Social Work Team in the Child & Family Agency (see below for contact details).

Duty Social Work Team, Tusla – Child & Family Agency	An Garda Síochána
Duty Social Work Department, 492 North Circular Rd, Parkview, Dublin 1. 01 8566856 9am - 5pm	Mountjoy Garda Station, 399 North Circular Rd, Inns Quay, Dublin 7 (01) 666 8600

- If the concern is urgent and the child is in immediate danger, the report to the Child & Family Agency will be made by telephone and followed up with the completed Standard Report Form.
- In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána
- The DLP may use the process of informal consultation with the Duty Social Work Team to discuss the response to a child protection and welfare concern and whether or not it warrants reasonable grounds for concern. Informal consultation is carried out without providing the name of the family or the child. If advised to do so, a formal report will be made.
- The DLP will record information about the concern, informal consultation (if carried out) and details regarding if and when the parents were informed.

Community Services/Services with a Voluntary Management Committee:

As there is a voluntary management committee in place in DALC Little Learners Creche, the chairperson is informed each time a referral or report is made under the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. In accordance with the confidentiality policy, no identifying information is included when informing the chairperson.

Procedure when a referral is not made to the Child & Family Agency

- Not all concerns will meet the reasonable grounds for concern. In this case, the concern and any informal consultation will be documented and kept confidentially and securely.
- The DLP will inform the member of staff, volunteer or student who raised the concern that it is not being referred to in writing, indicating the reasons. The DLP will advise the individual that they may make a report themselves or contact the Duty Social Work Team and that the provision of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 will apply.

3.4 Informing Parents about Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

- Good communication with parents is particularly important in ensuring best outcomes for children and any concerns about the health and well-being of a child will always be discussed with parents from the outset.
- When a child protection concern is being reported to the Child & Family Agency, good practice indicates that parents should be informed about the report unless doing so may put the child at further risk. The DLP may seek advice from the Child and Family Agency Social Work Department in relation to this.

4. Confidentiality Statement

- The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of the staff in the service to share and exchange relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities regarding confidentiality and the exchange of information.
- All information regarding a concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect is only shared on ‘a need to know’ basis in the interests of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Any staff dealing with a disclosure from a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled taking full account of legal requirements.
- Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection the exchange of information between different professional staff with a responsibility for ensuring the protection and welfare of children. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

5. Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees

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

When developing procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse or neglect against employees Little Learners Creche will seek legal advice.

Little Learners Creche is aware that the protection and welfare of the children in the service are paramount, and their safety and well-being is the priority. However, the service also has a duty and responsibility, as an employer, in respect of its employees.

There are two procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an employee:

1. Reporting procedure in respect of any child protection and welfare concern
2. The procedure in respect to the allegation against the employee

It is recommended that two different people are nominated to manage each procedure. In our staff team it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the parties.

- It is the Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for reporting the matter to the Child & Family Agency (as per the reporting procedure).
- If the concern meets the reasonable grounds for reporting then it should be referred without delay to the Child & Family Agency.
- To be reported to the Child & Family Agency the allegation must meet the reasonable grounds for reporting of a concern. Informal consultation with the Child & Family Agency may be used to determine if reasonable grounds are present.
- The Board of Management is the employer,
- All staff and volunteers in the service are aware who to contact should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any employee in the service.
- If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure will be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it.
- Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written record of the allegation will be made and a written statement should be sought from this person.
- Where an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee while executing their duties, an employer should privately inform the employee of the following:
 - (i) The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
 - (ii) The nature of the allegation.

The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond; the response should be noted and passed onto the Child & Family Agency with the formal report.

- All stages of the process should be recorded.
- If an investigation is required then as Little Learners Creche is a small staff team, independent, external parties may be called upon.

- Whether or not the matter is being reported to the Child & Family Agency, the employer is always informed of an allegation of abuse or neglect against an employee.
- Confidentiality: It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.
- Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures will be adhered to. It is very important to note protective measures are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.
- The Centre will maintain regular and close liaison with the Child & Family Agency and or An Garda Síochána and ensure that no action by the service frustrates or undermines any investigation.
- Further action will be guided by employment legislation, the contract of employment, the other policies and procedures of the service (including the disciplinary policy) and the advice of the investigating agencies.
- Little Learners Creche will always seek legal advice when dealing with allegations of abuse or neglect against an employee.

5.2 Parents and Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees

- Parents have the right to contact the Child & Family Agency to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about the employee or service.
- Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be

Kept informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.
- If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed, their parents will be informed immediately.

6. Record Keeping

- Under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, accurate and up to date records in relation to children, staff and service provision must be kept. The Early Years (Pre-school) Inspectorate will have access to files for inspection purposes.
- Parents can have access to the files and records of their own children on request but may not have access to information about any other child.
- Only employees involved with a particular child should have access to confidential files.
- Records are stored in compliance with 2016 Child Care Regulations.
- Where there are child protection or welfare concerns, observations/records will be kept on an ongoing basis and information shared with the Child and Family Agency as appropriate. It is important to note where these will be recorded and stored.
- Procedures are in place for archiving records.

- All records should be managed in line with the service Data Protection Policy

7. Code of Behaviour

We at Little Learners Creche recognise the importance of a Code of Behaviour between staff and children as recommended in Our Duty to Care.

Our Code of Behaviour is kept under regular review.

The Code of Behaviour supports all staff and volunteers to have a clear understanding of what is acceptable with respect to their behaviour with children.

We recognise that children have an equal right to our service provision in line with the Equal Status Act and the National Disability Strategy.

We are committed to -

- Valuing and respecting all children as individuals

- Listening to children

- Involving children in decision making as appropriate

- Encouraging children to express themselves

- Working in partnership with parents

- Promoting positive behaviour

- Valuing difference

- Implementing and adhering to all relevant policies to keep children safe

-The Code of Behaviour is given to all staff and volunteers at induction and it is expected that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the code and that they will raise any questions arising with the manager.

- We adhere to Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 Schedule 6 Adult: Child Ratios.

PART TIME DAY CARE SERVICE	
AGE RANGE	ADULT:CHILD RATIO
0-1 year	1:3
1-2years	1:5
2-3years	1:6
3-6years	1:8

SESSIONAL PRESCHOOL SERVICE	
AGE RANGE	ADULT:CHILD RATIO
0-1 year	1:3
1-2years	1:5
2-6years	1:11

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect :

(I) the safety and well-being of the child must take priority

(II) Reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency.

- Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.
- Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

‘A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by – (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.’

Links to Aistear	
Communication	2..5,2.1

Links to Siolta	
Standard 9:Health& Welfare	9.3

Person Responsible: _____

This policy was adopted by Little Learners Creche on Date: _____

Signed by: _____

On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: _____