**Bambi’s Land Montessori & ASD Play School**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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| **Document Title:** | **Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures** |
| **Document Author:** | **Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk, Canavan Byrne** |
| **Document Approved:** | **Claudia Fitzpatrick** |
| **Person(s) responsible for developing, distributing and reviewing Policy** | **Claudia Fitzpatrick** |
| **Person responsible for approving Policy** | **Claudia Fitzpatrick** |
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* This policy has been communicated to parents/guardians via the method listed above.
* All relevant staff are fully aware of Child Safeguarding requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy and its procedures.
* All relevant staff have received training on this policy. Please refer to details of staff training and resource links in this document.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this Service is to provide a Sessional facility for children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and 6 months. We also have an Early Intervention Unit for Children with Autism aged 3 years to 6 years.

We open 38 weeks per year and daily from 8:45am-11:45am, Monday to Friday. Our Autistic Unit opens from 9am-1pm. We have capacity to cater for a total of 22 children, and a maximum number of 22 children at any one time. Our adult-to-child ratios are listed in Table 1.1 on page 27 of this document. We currently have 20 registered children in our Sessional care and 6 children in the Autistic Unit.

This Service is 100 % privately owned by Claudia Fitzpatrick.

Our Service is located at 2 Coleman Crescent, Lusk Village, Co Dublin.

Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk has 9 staff.

We provide the following services and activities for the children:

* ECCE Sessional
* Early Intervention Unit for Children with Autism
* Montessori and Play based Curriculum
* Nappy Changing facilities
* Trained and qualified staff

**Statement of Intent**

Our priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends our service. The safety and welfare of the child is paramount to us. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review out guiding principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures every 12 months at least. We understand fully that the safeguarding of children is every adult’s responsibility.

We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, to be listened to and to be heard.

We understand that all children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background. Therefore, we are committed to ensure that all children in Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in our care.

We do this by:

* Making sure that our staff and students are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
* Having procedures readily in place to recognise, respond to and report concerns in relation to children’s protection and welfare.
* Making sure all staff are Garda vetted prior to engagement.
* Having clear Codes of Behaviour for management, staff and students in the form of a Handbook.
* Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents.
* Giving parents/guardians, children and staff information about what we do and what to expect from us.
* Letting parents/guardians and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is something that they are not happy about. Having a procedure to respond to these complaints.
* Having a clear reporting procedure to be followed should a staff member have a concern about a child in line with the obligations of Mandated persons outlined in *Children First (2017) and The Children First Act 2015.*
* Having a procedure to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect against staff members.
* Having a system where the policy and safeguarding statement is reviewed annually at least by the Management, or as regularly as is required following any changes or updates.

**Policy**

*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* was published by the Department of Child and Youth Affairs in 2017 and *Our Duty to Care* together form the basis of our Service’s Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures:

Children First Publication (2017) available at:

<https://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/publications/20171002ChildrenFirst2017.pdf>

Our Duty to Care Document available at:

<https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/our_duty_to_care.pdf>

Latest Publication on Child Protection and Welfare from Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2020) available at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d839a6-child-protection-and-welfare/>

See also the Child protection and Welfare Practice Handbook available at: <http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CF_WelfarePracticehandbook.pdf>

* This policy is applicable at all times when children are in the care of the Service
* For the purpose of this policy, a “child” means anyone who is under 18 years of age who is not or has not been married.
* All staff and persons who work within the Service, must read and understand this Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Document, as well as the accompanying Child Safeguarding Statement, and it will be part of a new staff member’s induction training. Clarification on any point may be sought from the Designated Liaison Person / Manager, Claudia Fitzpatrick.

**Our Statutory Obligations**

One of the main objectives of the Children First Act 2015 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 is to ensure that our Service keeps children safe from harm while in our care. We will prevent, as far as is practicable and possible, deliberate harm or abuse to the children availing of our services.

While it is not possible to remove all risk from our Service, we have put in place Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

The Children First Act and National Guidance Document places specific obligations on us including the requirement to:

* Keep children **safe from harm** while they are using our Service.
* Carry out a **risk assessment** to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while in our care.
* Develop a **Child Safeguarding Statement** that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified. *See Child Safeguarding Statement*.
* Appoint a **Designated Person (and Deputy Person)** to be the first point of contact in respect of our Child Safeguarding Statement. *See* APPENDIX 7

**As part of the policy, our Service will:**

* Appoint both a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for dealing with child Safeguarding concerns and a Deputy Liaison Person.
* Provide induction training on the Child and Adult Protection Policy to all staff and students and ensure that they understand their obligations as a ‘Mandated Person’ under the Children First Act 2015.
* Maintain a list of persons in the Service who are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015, *See* APPENDIX 8.
* Ensure that all staff attend child Safeguarding training as appropriate.
* Provide supervision and support for staff and students in contact with children.
* Share information about the Child Safeguarding Policy with families.
* Ensure this policy will be shared with parents/guardians on enrolment to our Service and be available in hard copy on request at our Service.
* Work and co-operate with the relevant statutory agencies as required.

**The Designated Liaison Person:**

We will always have an appointed Designated Liaison Person and a Deputy Liaison Person in the event of the Designated Liaison Person being unavailable. Both our Designated Liaison Person and our Deputy Liaison Person will undertake the new Children First E-Learning Training Programme developed by TUSLA, HSE and DCYA. Their certificates of successful completion will be on display in our Service.

We will endeavour to send the Designated Liaison Person(s) and the Deputy Liaison Person on any necessary or new training courses that become available in the future. We regularly consult with various trusted advisory bodies such as TUSLA, ECI, DCYA and/or NYCI around any new training programmes or information booklets that may become available and are of relevance to our staff training and induction on Child Safeguarding

TUSLA Child Protection and Welfare link :

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/>

Early Childhood Ireland Training link:

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/education-training/>

Department of Children and Youth Affairs link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-children-and-youth-affairs/>

National Youth Council of Ireland Training on Child Protection link:

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/child-protection/>

**We have appointed a Designated Liaison Person and a Deputy Designated Liaison Person. Their details and contact details are displayed on the Parents/Guardians’ board**

**The Role of the Designated Liaison Persons is to:**

* Establish contact with the relevant bodies and/or Duty Social Worker responsible for child Safeguarding in the Service's catchment area and ensure that the Service's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are followed where **Criteria for Reporting: Definitions and Thresholds are reached, or Reasonable Grounds for Concern** exist about individual children.
* Be available to all staff, and, in the case of their absence, that a Deputy Liaison Person is available.
* Ensure that they are knowledgeable about Child Safeguarding and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments.
* Ensure the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of the Service are followed.
* Be responsible, as a Mandated Person, for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of children to TUSLA – Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána.
* Ensure the appropriate information is included in the report to the Child and Family Agency and that the report is submitted in writing (under confidential cover) using the Standard Reporting Form, see APPENDIX 1.
* To liaise with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate [the Mandated Person who has a concern and makes a report also has a responsibility to liaise with the agencies as required].
* To provide updated information and advice on child protection, safeguarding and training within the Service.
* Keep relevant people within the Service informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality.
* Ensure that an individual case record is maintained to clearly include the actions taken by the Service, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
* Maintain a comprehensive log/record of all child Safeguarding and welfare concerns within the Service.
* Ensure sufficient information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed, dated, and in writing under confidential cover.

**Mandated Persons**

***Children First 2017: Chapter 3 and Appendix 2 refers:***

*‘All childcare staff are ‘Mandated Persons’ under The Children First Act 2015.’*

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people to report child Safeguarding concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla - Child and Family Agency. These Mandated Persons must also assist Tusla, on request, in its assessment of child Safeguarding concerns about children who have been the subject of a mandated report.

Mandated Persons are people who have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Mandated Persons include professionals working with children in early years settings.

Mandated Persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015.

**These are:**

1. To report the harm of children **above a defined threshold** to Tusla

2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject

 of a mandated report.

*See* APPENDIX 5 *Mandated Persons Responsibilities* (*Children First Act 2015).*

*See* APPENDIX 8 *List of Mandated Persons in Our Service.*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**It is important to note that the statutory obligation of Mandated Persons to report under the Children First Act 2015 must be discharged by the Mandated Person and cannot be discharged by the Designated Liaison Person on their behalf. Within our setting, the DLPs will also fulfil the role of Mandated Persons. This means that, if the Designated Liaison Person is made aware of a concern about a child that meets or exceeds the thresholds of harm for mandated reporting, they have a statutory obligation to make a report to Tusla arising from their position as a Mandated Person.**

**While Mandated Persons have statutory obligations to report mandated concerns, they may make a report jointly with another person, whether the other person is a Mandated Person or not. In effect, this means that a Mandated Person can make a joint report with a Designated Liaison Person.**

**Criteria for Reporting: Definitions and Thresholds**

*Chapter 3 Page 20 Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).*

Mandated Persons within our setting are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances. The four types of abuse are described in APPENDIX 2*.* The threshold of harm for each category of abuse at which Mandated Persons have a **legal** obligation to report concerns is outlined below.

1. **NEGLECT:** Neglect is defined as ‘to deprive a child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care’. The threshold of harm, which must be reported to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child’s needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where **the child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**
2. **EMOTIONAL ABUSE/ILL-TREATMENT:** Ill-treatment is defined as ‘to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated’. Emotional abuse is covered in the definition of ill-treatment used in the Children First Act 2015. The threshold of harm, which must be reported to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when it is known, believed or there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where **the child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

Emotional Abuse of children and young people may extend to online misuse, abuse and/or cyber-bullying. The use of electronic or digital means by an individual to deliberately harass, ridicule or emotionally hurt another person is an additional form of abuse that our Service is aware of.

1. **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Physical abuse is covered in the references to assault in the Children First Act 2015. The threshold of harm, which must be reported to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when it is known, believed or there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result **the child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**
2. **SEXUAL ABUSE:**  A Mandated Person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused or exploited, then this must report this to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015. Sexual abuse to be reported under the Children First Act 2015 [as amended by section 55 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017] is defined as an offence against the child, as listed in Schedule 3 of the Children First Act 2015. A full list of relevant offences against the child which are considered sexual abuse is set out in ***Appendix 3 of Children First (2017).***

As all sexual abuse falls within the category of **seriously affecting a child’s health, welfare or development**, all concerns about sexual must abuse must be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla. There is one exception, which deals with certain consensual sexual activity between teenagers, which is outlined on ***page 23 Children First (2017).***

The service endorses that the ***Children First (2017) Guidelines*** advise that the ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person’s willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily or easily visible.

**Reasonable Grounds for Concern**

***Chapter 2, Page 06 Children First (2017)***

The DLPs or Mandated Persons should always inform Tusla when they have **reasonable grounds for concern** that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. We understand that if this is neglected or ignored, it could result in on-going harm to the child. We understand that it is not necessary for us to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern to Tusla. All that is required of us is that we have ***reasonable grounds for concern***. It is Tusla’s role to assess concerns that are reported to it.

Reasonable grounds for a child Safeguarding 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 or exploitation.
* 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 concerns should be made without delay to Tusla.

**Recognising Concerns:**

Staff or students 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/ Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Liaison Person at any time.

All staff and students should be knowledgeable in definitions of abuse and the signs and symptoms of abuse as outlined in *Children’s First* (2017)

*See* APPENDIX 2: *TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND HOW THEY MAY BE RECOGNISED*

**Disclosures of Abuse from a Child**

If a mandated person, within our setting receives a disclosure of harm from a child, which is above the thresholds set out in **Criteria for Reporting: Definitions and Thresholds** they must make a mandated report of the concern to Tusla. **They are not required to judge the truth of the claims or the credibility of the child**. If the concern does not meet the threshold to be reported as a mandated concern the mandated person should report it to Tusla as a ***reasonable concern***.

It is our duty within this setting to report any disclosure even if there is a reluctance to do so for a number of reasons, for example the child may say that they do not want the disclosure to be reported. However, we inform Tusla of all risks to children above the threshold, as the removal of a risk to one child does not necessarily mean that there are no other children at risk. The information contained in a disclosure may be critical to Tusla’s assessment of risk to another child either now or in the future.

Professionals within our setting will deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

* React calmly.
* Listen carefully and attentively.
* Take the child seriously and show compassion.
* Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you and that they are not to blame.
* Do not promise to keep anything secret.
* Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions.
* Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood.
* Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser.
* Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow.
* Make an accurate written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible.
* Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of Children First (2017) and legislation.

**On-going Support:**

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that staff continue in a supportive relationship with the child. Disclosure is a huge step for many children.

**Staff should continue to offer support, particularly through:**

* Maintaining a positive relationship with the child.
* Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child and allowing safe opportunities for any further discussions as required.
* Continue to include the child in the usual activities.
* Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as in Reporting Procedures in this policy.

**Procedure when a referral is not made to the Child and Family Agency:**

**A suspicion which is not identified by** **Criteria for Reporting:** **Definitions and Thresholds or 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 or student who raised the concern that it is not being referred in writing, indicating the reasons. The DLP will advise the individual that they may make a report themselves (**see Mandated Persons and Making a Mandated Report)**.The provision of the *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998* will apply.
* Persons reporting suspected child abuse or neglect should not interview the child or the child’s parents/guardians in any detail about the alleged abuse. This will instead be carried out by the TUSLA Duty Social Worker or An Garda Síochána.
* If staff, students have any concerns these should be discussed immediately with the Designated Liaison Person.

**Making a Mandated Report**

***Chapter 3, Page 24 Children First (2017)***

Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015 requires Mandated Persons to report a mandated concern to Tusla ‘as soon as practicable’.

**Mandated Persons will:**

* Submit a report of a mandated concern to Tusla using the required report form, (see APPENDIX 1) on which they should indicate that they are a Mandated Person and that their report is about a mandated concern.
* Include as much relevant information as possible in report as this will aid effective and early intervention for the child and may reduce the likelihood of Tusla needing to contact the Mandated Person for further information. The report form and contact details on the Tusla website ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)). See also *APPENDICIES 1 and 4*.
* Post or submit electronically the mandated report form to Tusla.
* Not report the same concern more than once. However, if the Mandated Person becomes aware of any additional information, another separate report should be made to Tusla. In addition, Mandated Persons are not required to make a report where the sole basis for their knowledge, belief or suspicion of harm is as a result of becoming aware that another Mandated Person has made a report to Tusla about the child.

**NOTE**

**If the concern may require urgent intervention to make the child safe, section 14(7) of the Children First Act 2015 allows the Mandated Person to alert Tusla of the concern in advance of submitting a written report. The Mandated Person must then submit a mandated report to Tusla on the report form within three days.**

**A Mandated Person who makes a report to an authorised person is protected from civil liability under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.**

**Details on how Tusla deals with concerns received can be found in *Chapter 5 of Children First (2017)***

**Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk of harm pending intervention by Tusla. If it is thought the child is in immediate danger and the Mandated Person cannot contact Tusla, the Mandated Person should contact the Gardaí.**

**Informing the Family That a Report is Being Made**

***Chapter 3, Page 25 Children First (2017)***

The Children First Act 2015 does not require the Mandated Person to inform the family that a report under the legislation is being made to Tusla. However, it is generally good practice to inform the family that a report is being made and the reasons for the decision.

It is not necessary to inform the family that a report is being made if by doing so it is considered that the child will be placed at further risk, or it is considered that the family’s knowledge of the report could impair Tusla’s ability to carry out a risk assessment. Also, the family do not need to be informed if it is considered that by doing so, staff in the Service may be placed at risk of harm from the family.

**Consequences of Non-reporting**

***Chapter 3, Page 2 Children First (2017)***

The Children First Act 2015 does not impose criminal sanctions on Mandated Persons who fail to make a report to Tusla. However, all staff should be aware that there are possible consequences for a failure to report. There are a number of administrative actions that Tusla could take if, after an investigation, it emerges that Mandated Persons did not make a mandated report and a child was subsequently left at risk or harmed.

All Staff/Mandated Persons in our service have been made aware of the consequences in place for any failures to report welfare concerns to TUSLA. They have all been briefed on the Definitions and Thresholds or Reasonable Grounds for Concern. (See APPENDIX 6).

The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 requires that any person who has information about a serious offence against a child, which may result in charges or prosecution, must report this to An Garda Síochána. Failure to report under the Act is a criminal offence under that legislation. This obligation is **in addition to** any obligations under the Children First Act 2015.

**NOTE**

**Failure to report a child Safeguarding concern may invoke the Disciplinary Policy of this Service.**

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

* A child tells or indicates that he/ she is being abused. This is called a disclosure.
* An admission or indication from 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 witnessed 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 measured duration of time that a child is suffering from physical or emotional neglect.
* An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but an innocent or unlikely explanation is given.
* Concern about the behaviour or practice of a colleague.

**NOTE**

**All personnel are expected to consult *Children First 2017 [Chapter 2, Page 07 Children First (2017)]* and the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* for detailed information on the signs and symptoms of abuse. *See APPENDIX 2: TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND HOW THEY MAY BE RECOGNISED.***

**The Reporting Procedure:**

Any member of staff who has a concern about a child in the Service currently being abused, abused in the past, or likely to be at risk of abuse, is obliged to verbally relay their concern to the Designated Liaison Person as a matter of urgency. **See Criteria for Reporting: Definitions and Thresholds.**

1. Mandated staff who have a concern should record in writing what the child has said, including as far as possible, the exact words utilised by the child.
2. The mandated staff must inform the Designated Liaison Person.
3. Details must be recorded by mandated staff on the TUSLA Standard Reporting Form, which is kept in a press in the rooms, which must then be signed by the person making the report. *See Appendix 1*: Standard Reporting Form or <http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/publications-and-forms>. **See Making a Mandated Report.**
4. Unless it would put the child at further risk to do so, the **Designated Liaison Person or Manager** will make every effort to contact the parents/guardians to discuss the concern made by the child. A written record will be kept of this meeting with the parents/guardians.
5. The Designated Liaison Person will examine the **Criteria for Reporting: Definitions and Thresholds** or determine if **Reasonable Grounds for Concern** are present. ***Remember, Mandated Persons should be aware that the legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rest with the Mandated Person and not with the Designated Liaison Person.***
6. Immediate action must be taken to protect the child in question and indeed any other children who may be considered at ‘risk’.
7. A child will never be interviewed regarding the concern by any staff. However, all comments made by the child will be noted and filed as required under confidential cover.
8. Allegations against staff will be dealt with separately and the disciplinary procedure will be followed, as necessary.
9. In cases of emergency, where a child is deemed to be at immediate and serious risk and a Duty Social worker is unavailable, An Garda Síochána should be contacted. **Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending TUSLA intervention.**
10. The Service will take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by TUSLA or An Garda Síochána. Close liaisons will be maintained with these authorities to achieve this.
11. Where there are reasonable grounds a report should be made to TUSLA. **See Making a Mandated Report**. Each area has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child Safeguarding concerns. The Duty Social Worker will assess the information available. *See APPENDIX 4: Contact Details.*
12. Once a report is submitted, the duty social worker may need to speak with the person who had the initial concern.
13. In the event that the Designated Liaison Person makes a decision not to report to TUSLA, full details of the decision must be recorded including the reasons for not reporting plus any action taken. This report should be stored as confidential by the Designated Liaison Person in the child’s records and kept by the service in a secure place. ***Remember, a Mandated Person should be aware that the legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rest with the Mandated Person and not with the Designated Liaison Person.***
14. Allegations or concerns should not be investigated by the Designated Liaison Person or a staff member but passed on to TUSLA /Garda to follow through.

**Dealing with a Retrospective Disclosure by an Adult of Abuse as a Child:**

***Chapter 3, Page 23 Children First (2017)***

Some adults may disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures may come to light when an adult attends counselling or is being treated for a psychiatric or health problem.

The reporting requirements under the Children First Act (2015) apply only to information that Mandated Persons TERM LIFTED either received or became aware of since the Act came into force, in relation to whether the harm occurred before or after that point. However, if they have a reasonable concern about past abuse, where information came to their attention before the Act and there is a possible continuing risk to children, they should report it to Tusla under ***Children First (2017) Guidance***.

The Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003, and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) do not prevent the sharing of information on a reasonable and proportionate basis for the purposes of child Safeguarding. Tusla has the authority to share information concerning a child who is the subject of a risk assessment with a Mandated Person who has been asked to provide assistance.

Tusla must only share what is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case. Information that Tusla shares with the Mandated Person, if assisting it to carry out an assessment, must not be shared with a third party, unless Tusla considers it appropriate and authorises in writing that the information may be shared.

Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 makes it an offence to disclose information to a third party which has been shared by Tusla during the course of an assessment, unless Tusla has given written authorisation to do so. Failure to comply with this section, may result in liability of a fine or imprisonment for up to six months or both. This offence can also be applied to an organisation. *Chapter 3, Page 27 Children First (2017)*

**Within our setting:**

* Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and extends to all areas of our Service. Confidentiality is about treating sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.
* It is our policy to keep all personal information about our children, families, and staff private. Confidential and personal information about our children/parents/guardians will only be shared by the Manager and Designated Liaison Person in relation to child safety, in line with this Child Safeguarding Policy. Any breach of confidentiality by any member of staff will lead to disciplinary action. (For further information see our Confidentiality Policy).

**Allegations Against Staff:**

Should an allegation arise against staff within the service, and the Manager is the Designated Liaison Person, a separate person should be assigned to deal with the HR investigation. It is a requirement to separate these issues and manage them independently. Therefore, the Manager will outsource this function to somebody with expertise from outside the service. This allows the Manager to deal with TUSLA and the child’s family.

**Policy and Procedure on Response to Allegations of Abuse against Employees and Students:**

Child Safeguarding is about promoting the welfare of children who attend a Child Care service/school. To this end it also encompasses the monitoring of professional practice within an organisation.

An organisation has a legal and moral responsibility to respond to any allegation of abuse either verbal or physical of a child by a member of staff, student.

This procedure is in line with the guidance outlined in *Children First (2017)*

**Response to allegations of abuse against employees, students:**

Allegations of abuse may be made against adults working with children, employees, students and child-minders. The following guidelines should be followed in the event of such an allegation of abuse against an employee during the execution of that employee’s duties or where information about an employee in relation to a situation outside of the work context is reported.

Our first duty of care in this situation is to the child and our first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.

* If an allegation is made against an employee or other person working within the Service to another employee or other person, they must inform the Designated Liaison Person (or the Deputy Liaison Person) verbally and simultaneously record what they have been told or what they may have observed. Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith.
* The details of this concern must be recorded on the Standard Reporting Form, which is kept in a press in the rooms, which must then be signed by the person making the report and they will be reminded of the need for confidentiality in this matter.
* The Manager will inform the member of staff that an allegation has been made against them. The disciplinary procedure for staff will be followed in this instance.

The Manager must privately inform the employee, about whom the allegation is made, of the following:

* The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her.
* The nature of the allegation.
* The employee should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Manager should note the response and pass on this information when making a formal report to TUSLA.
* The employee should also be informed of their right to an adjournment of the meeting until such time as they can seek appropriate representation. The action will be guided by the agreed procedures (Disciplinary Procedure), the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice.

While adhering to the principle of natural justice enshrined within our constitution in relation to the rights of the accused, the vulnerability of the alleged victim must be foremost in our mind, therefore any postponement must be afforded within a reasonable time frame that is 24 hours.

* The parents/guardians of the alleged victim must be informed immediately by the Designated Liaison Person.
* The name or any identifying information of the reporting adult would generally be given to the staff member or worker against whom the allegation has been made by the Manager. There may be exceptional circumstances pending TUSLA advice or consultation, where this may not be the case.
* When an allegation is received it will be assessed promptly and carefully.
* The Manager may then ask the member of staff who the allegation has been made against to leave the premises immediately and they will be suspended on full pay until the matter has been fully investigated.
* However, all allegations may not require a worker to be sent home i.e. allegations of poor practice where increased levels of supervision may be sufficient until the matter is sorted out. Poor practice will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure, as necessary.
* At this point in the process it will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to TUSLA – this decision should be based on ***reasonable grounds for concern* (See APPENDIX 6)**
* If it is felt that there are grounds for concern all matters relating to the allegations, it should be reported to the Duty Social Worker.
* At this point the Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked. This will be a separate process and will be overseen by the Manager, (who may outsource this function), and **not** the Designated Liaison Person.
* Should a staff member, following the investigation, be re-instated with no disciplinary action, this should be taken as evidence that no blame/fault/suspicion attaches to them.
* Where the complaint is not upheld, management should ensure that the reputation and career prospects of the staff member concerned are not adversely affected by reason of the complaint having been brought against him/her.

The staff member (who had the allegation made against them) should be offered counselling and any other supports considered necessary to restore his/her confidence and morale.

* The staff member who made the complaint should be reassured that management appreciates that the complaint was made in good faith. If required, management will ensure that the staff member receives support e.g. external counselling, if requested or warranted.

**Parents/Guardians and Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees:**

* Parents/guardians have the right to contact the Tusla to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about an employee, employees or the Service.
* Parents/guardians 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/guardians will be informed immediately.

**Record Keeping:**

* The Service will conform to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988 -2018 plus any future amendments.
* 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 Inspectorate will have access to files for inspection purposes.
* Parents/guardians may 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 and will be used to inform staff on how best to meet the needs of the child.
* Records are stored in compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.
* Where there are child Safeguarding or welfare concerns, observations/records will be kept on an on-going basis and information shared with Tusla as appropriate.
* These will be stored securely.
* Procedures are in place for archiving records.
* All records are managed in line with our Data Protection Policy.
* We aim to ensure that all records are factual and written impartially.
* The Service will only share information with other professionals or agencies, with consent from parents/guardians or without their consent in terms of legal responsibility in relation to a Child Safeguarding issue.
* Records or reports should not be altered or adjusted, if there are new developments then a new record of this information should be completed and added to the existing relevant file.

*(For further information see our policies on Observations, Record Keeping and Data Protection)*

**Code of Behaviour for Staff:**

For the protection of staff and children this code of behaviour has been introduced to provide clarity on what is expected and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour as recommended in *Our Duty to Care.* Our code of behaviour is kept under regular review.

* We recognise that children have an equal right to our service provision in line with the *Equal Status Act* and the *National Disability Strategy*.
* Staff should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities.
* While physical contact can be an effective way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned (for example, by invitation to the child).
* Staff should never physically punish, humiliate, isolate, or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they tell jokes of a sexual or allusive nature in the presence of children.
* Staff should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism or becoming over involved or spending a lot of time with any one child.
* Staff should be sensitive to the possibility of developing inappropriate aversions to any one child as a result of any behaviour challenges the child might pose to staff. Staff are always expected to understand that the child’s behaviour is separate to the child and does not characterise or form part of a child’s identity.
* Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to either a designated person, or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of management.
* It is recommended that Child Care services develop a positive attitude amongst workers and children that respects the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
* It is not recommended that staff give lifts in their cars to individual children, especially for long journeys.

*(This code has been adapted from Our Duty to Care Fact sheet 1)*

**Visitors/Students:**

**All Visitors to the Service must check in by signing all required information in the Visitor's book**

Visitors - including inspectors, contractors, work experience students etc. should never be left alone with the children. If they are going to address the children, it is incumbent upon the Management to check their credentials and to ensure that the content of the address is appropriate.

All Visitors [Including Inspectors, Contractors] should be equipped with Identification and will be asked to produce proof of identity before entering the service.

All students will be carefully supervised and monitored by the Manager. Secondary school pupils who come to the service for ‘work experience’ will also be carefully supervised and monitored and must not be left alone with the children at any time.

**We are committed to:**

* Valuing and respecting all children as individuals.
* Listening actively to children.
* Involving children in decision making as appropriate.
* Encouraging children to express themselves.
* Working in partnership with parents/guardians.
* Promoting Positive Behaviour.
* Valuing and celebrating diversity and difference.
* Implementing and adhering to all relevant policies to keep children safe.

**Working in a safe environment – Protection of Adults and Children**

Management will ensure a safe environment exists for staff and children by monitoring that all staff:

* Follow toileting and nappy changing procedures (For further information see Nappy Changing and Toileting Policies).
* Are listened to and any concerns expressed about unacceptable practice or behaviour of colleagues are promptly followed up by management.
* Are supported when dealing with challenging behaviour of children and staff understand and follow positive behaviour management strategies.

*(For further information see Managing Behaviour Policy).*

**Staff Ratios:**

The adult/child ratios are governed by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

The Service will follow the adult/child ratios as defined in the below Regulations.

**TABLE 1:1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SERVICE:** | **AGE:** | **ADULT/CHILD RATIO:** |
| ECCE ASD | 2.8 years – 5.6 years3 years – 6 years | 1:114: 6 |
| At least 5 adults are on the premises at all times. |

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

All employees have a duty to adhere to the Code of Behaviour and to bring breaches of the code to the attention of the Manager. Breaches of the Code of Behaviour are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

**Recruitment and Selection Procedure:**

The Service carries out a comprehensive and detailed recruitment procedure in order to protect our children attending the Service.

All applicants should be made aware and reminded throughout the recruitment period that their application and the follow up process of recruitment will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence. The information supplied by the applicant and any other information supplied on their behalf should only be seen by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.

Applicants will receive a clear job description and relevant information on the Service. Additional information, including a copy of the Service’s Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures should also be supplied to each applicant.

*(For further information see our Recruitment Policy)*

**Personnel File:**

An up to date and accurate personnel file is kept for each member of staff that includes the following records:

* Proof of identity and that the person is over 18 years of age.
* Proof of satisfactory Garda Vetting and/or International Police Clearance.
* Two validated written references from reputable sources, including a reference from the most recent place of employment.
* Verification of qualifications.
* Investigation of any gaps of employment.

**Induction:**

* As part of the induction process, all new management, staff and students will be briefed on all the elements of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure document, including the ethos of the Service, child centred practice and the Code of Behaviour, within the first week of employment.
* All management, staff and students will be required to commit to and abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Document. They are required to confirm that they have read and understand the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Document with their signature and a record will be kept on file.
* The Code of Behaviour is given to all management staff, students at induction and it is expected that all staff, students are familiar with the code and they will raise any questions arising with the Manager.

**Staff Supervision and Support:**

* Regular supervision and support are available to staff, through one to one meetings or group meetings.
* Staff will be supported while dealing with a child safety concern and outside support will be sought where necessary, the costs of this will be borne by the Service.

**Garda Vetting:**

In accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 we will ensure that all staff members are Garda vetted, and have a valid International Police Clearance Certificate where necessary (where a prospective staff member has resided in countries outside of Ireland or Northern Ireland for more than 6 consecutive months or more).

Our policy is that the Garda vetting process will be fully completed **prior to starting work at the service for employees** working directly with children. Repeat Garda vetting may be completed at any time during a contract of employment and will be completed at three-year intervals and records will be held for 5 years.

*(See the Garda Vetting Policy for further information).*

**Partnership with Parents/Guardians:**

The Service recognises the importance of working with parents/guardians. It has an “open door” policy where families are always welcome but where the needs of all of the children in our care are always the first priority. In light of COVID and current required safety measures, we ask that appointments are kindly made ahead of the proposed visit date to management. This is to ensure that appropriate safety measures can be put in place to accommodate meetings. Parents/guardians will be made feel welcome and regular exchange of information with parents/guardians and staff will enable a two-way process of support on a continuous basis insofar as is possible and practical.

Parents/guardians will be made aware of any observations, records and notes kept by us about their children including patterns of behaviour, conversations and any injuries/bruising they may have upon arrival to the Service.

All records will be made available upon request and are kept confidentially and securely. All parents/guardians will be made aware of our policies and procedures.

*(For further information see our Partnership with Parents/Guardians Policy)*

**Complaints:**

* Our children/staff/parents/guardians have the right to voice their opinions and concerns. It is our policy to welcome all suggestions, comments and complaints in relation to our Service. Any comments or suggestions can be made to any member of staff. We will give careful attention and prompt and courteous response to any suggestions, comments or complaints.

*(For further information see our Complaints Policy).*

* If a complaint involves a child Safeguarding concern, the reporting procedure will be followed in line with this Child Safeguarding Policy.

**Accidents and Incidents:**

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, are the governing legislation. It is our policy to promote the health, wellbeing and personal safety of all our children and staff through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety. Although we adhere to all safety precautions and follow TUSLA guidelines, accidents can occur. *(For further information see our Accidents and Incidents Policy)*

**Social Media, Social Networking and Blogging:**

* Personal blogs should have clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author in the blog is the author’s alone and do not represent the views of the Service. Blogs should be clear and written in first person. It should be made clear that the writer is speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Service.
* Information published on blog(s) should comply with our confidentiality policy. This also applies to comments posted on other blogs, forums, and social networking sites.
* Staff are expected to remain respectful to the Service, management, other employees, customers, partners, and competitors at all times while using Social Media.
* Staff may not use social networking sites to befriend parents/guardians whose children attend the Service or to exchange any information about the Service or children attending the Service.
* Social media activities should not interfere with work commitments; Staff are not permitted to be active on social media during their rostered hours of work, excluding during their scheduled breaks times.

*(Refer to Internet and Email Usage Policy*.)

* A staff member must not publish any information regarding any child, family or colleague.
* Staff are expected to Respect copyright laws, and to reference or cite sources carefully and appropriately. Plagiarism applies online as well.
* Service logos and trademarks may not be used.

**Note: Social Networking websites include a range of websites such as - Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter etc.**

**Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk of harm pending intervention by Tusla. If it is thought that the child is in immediate danger and Tusla cannot be contacted, the Gardaí should be contacted.**

**Any breach of this policy may invoke the disciplinary policy.**

**This Child Safeguarding Policy may be updated from time to time, or as regularly as deemed necessary either from within or in line with legislation.**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY APPENDICES:**

**APPENDIX 1: STANDARD REPORTING FORM**

**APPENDIX 2: TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND HOW THEY**

 **MAY BE RECOGNISED**

**APPENDIX 3: THE U.N. CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (1989)**

**APPENDIX 4: DUTY SOCIAL WORKER AND LOCAL GARDA CONTACT INFORMATION**

**APPENDIX 5: MANDATED PERSONS RESPONSIBILITIES**

**APPENDIX 6: REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN**

**APPENDIX 7: REPORTING PROCEDURES**

**APPENDIX 8: LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS IN OUR SERVICE**

**APPENDIX 1: STANDARD REPORTING FORM**



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**APPENDIX 2:**

**TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND HOWTHEY MAY BE RECOGNISED**

***Chapter 2, Page 07 Children First (2017)***

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 a child welfare and protection issue for both children and the child Safeguarding procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser should be followed.

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 of neglect and abuse presented in this section are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

**Neglect**

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. On-going 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 influence 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 signs of neglect are observed consistently over a short duration of time of seeing the child, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

**The following are features of child neglect:**

* Children being 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 relationship 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, for example, 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 behaviours or actions.
* Extreme over protectiveness.
* Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom).
* On-going 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 single 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 and/or development is, 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 law 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.

**Examples of child 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 purpose 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.
* The taking of any unauthorised photography of a child that is explicit or revealing in any way for the purpose of use on an unauthorised platform (such as any website).
* 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 necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. Details on exemptions for mandated reporting of certain cases of underage consensual sexual activity can be found in ***Chapter 3 of Children First (2017).***

**APPENDIX 3: THE U.N. CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (1989)**

The Convention stipulates the following general principles:

* States shall ensure each child enjoys full rights without discrimination or distinctions of any kind.
* The child’s best interests shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social institutions, courts, administrative authorities or legislative bodies.
* Every child has the right to life and States shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, child survival and development.
* Children have the right to be heard.

The Convention stipulates the following substantive provisions:

**Civil Rights and Freedom:**

* The right to a name and a nationality.
* The right to a sense of identity.
* The right to freedom of expression.
* The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
* The right to freedom of association.
* The right to privacy.
* No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Family Environment and Parental Guidance:**

* States must respect the responsibilities of parents/guardians and extended family members to provide guidance for children.
* The Convention gives parents/guardians a joint and primary responsibility for raising their children.
* Children should not be separated from their parents/guardians unless this is deemed to be in the child’s best interests.
* Children and their parents/guardians have the right to leave any country and to enter their own for purposes of reunion.
* Children have the right to an adequate standard of living.
* The Convention obliges the State to provide special protection for children deprived of a family environment.
* The State has the obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.
* To protect children from all forms of abuse or neglect.
* It is the responsibility of the State to ensure – in cases of children victims of armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation – that they receive appropriate rehabilitative care and treatment to facilitate their recovery and social integration into society.
* A child placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment is entitled to have that placement regularly evaluated.

**Basic Health and Welfare of Children:**

* Every child has the right to life.
* Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent the survival and development of the child.
* The child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health.
* Disabled children have the right to special treatment, education and care.
* Children have the right to benefit from social security.
* Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child’s mental, physical, spiritual, value systems and social development.

**Education, Leisure and Recreation:**

* Children have the right to education.
* The aims of education are geared towards developing children’s personalities as well as their mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent.
* Children have a right to enjoy leisure, recreation and cultural activities.

**SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES:**

1. **Situations of armed conflict:**
* State parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 15 years of age take no part in hostilities and that no child below 15 is recruited into the armed forces.
* State parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict.
* Children have the right to appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.
* Special protection shall be given to refugee children or to a child seeking refugee status.
1. **In situations where children are in conflict with the law:**
* Regarding the administration of juvenile justice, children who come in conflict with the law have the right to treatment that promotes their dignity and self-worth, and also takes into account the child’s age and aims at his/her integration into society.
* Children are entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for their defence and judicial proceedings, and institutional placements shall be provided wherever possible.
* Any child deprived of liberty shall not be kept apart from adults unless it is in the child’s best interests to do so.
* A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with his/her family.
1. **In situations of exploitation:**
* Children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and from work that threatens their health.
* Children have the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs as well as from being involved in their production and distribution.
* Children have the right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and pornography.
* It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.
1. **In situations of children belonging to a minority or indigenous group:**
* Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

**APPENDIX 4: DUTY SOCIAL WORKER and LOCAL GARDA CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Child Safeguarding Social Work Services:**

Child and Family Agency,
180-189 Lakeshore Drive,
Airside Business Park,
Swords,
Co. Dublin.

01 8708000

**Details may also be found at this link**

[**http://www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/duty-social-work-teams**](http://www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/duty-social-work-teams)

If the Duty Social Worker is not available at the time of contact the caller should give sufficient details to the secretary to enable the Duty Social Worker to prioritise a response.

**Local Garda Station:**

Lusk Garda Station, 01 8437222

**Details may also be found at this link**

[**http://www.garda.ie/stations/default.aspx**](http://www.garda.ie/stations/default.aspx)

**APPENDIX 5: MANDATED PERSONS RESPONSIBILITIES**

 **(*Children First Act 2015)***

**Section 14(1) of the Children First Act 2015 states:**

*‘…where a Mandated Person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a Mandated Person, that a child–*

*(a) has been harmed,*

*(b) is being harmed, or*

*(c) is at risk of being harmed,*

*he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to the Agency.’*

**Section 14(2) of the Children First Act 2015 also places obligations on Mandated Persons to report any disclosures made by a child:**

*‘Where a child believes that he or she–*

*(a) has been harmed,*

*(b) is being harmed, or*

*(c) is at risk of being harmed,*

*and discloses this belief to a Mandated Person in the course of a Mandated Person’s employment or profession as such a person, the Mandated Person shall, … as soon as practicable, report that disclosure to the Agency.’*

**Section 2 of the Children First Act 2015 defines harm as follows:**

*‘harm means in relation to a child–*

*(a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or*

 *is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or,*

*(b) sexual abuse of the child.’*

**APPENDIX 6: REASONABLE GROUNDS CONCERN**

*Chapter 2, Page 06 Children First (2017)*

Tusla should always be informed when there are ***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 ongoing harm to the child. It is not necessary to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern to Tusla. All that is required is that there are ***reasonable grounds for concern***. It is Tusla’s role to assess concerns that are reported to it. If a concern is reported, the person reporting such concern can be assured that information will be carefully considered with any other information available and a child Safeguarding assessment will be carried out where sufficient risk is identified.

**Reasonable grounds for a child Safeguarding 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 concerns should be made without delay to Tusla.

**If it is thought that a child is in immediate danger and Tusla cannot be contacted, the Gardaí should be contacted without delay.**

# APPENDIX 7: Child Safeguarding Reporting Procedure Steps 1 – 4

**NOTE: In the case where the Designated Liaison Person or Mandated Person reaches the conclusion that reasonable grounds do not exist that they will not report the concern of the employee, student to the relevant TUSLA Social Work Department or An Garda Síochána, the individual employee, student who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the DLP is not taking action. The employee, student should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the TUSLA Social Work Department or An Garda Síochána.**

**As a Mandated Person, you should be aware that the legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rest with you and not with the Designated Liaison Person.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Designated Liaison Persons** | **Duty Social Worker** | **Local Garda** |
| Claudia FitzpatrickLynda O’ConnerMarie Bruke087 2958661 | Child and Family Agency, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin01 8708000 | Lusk Garda Station 01 8437222 |

**APPENDIX 8: LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS IN OUR SERVICE**

***Mandated persons*** *are people who have contact with children and/or families who, by virtue of their qualifications, training and experience, are in a key position to help protect children from harm.*

***Ancillary Staff*** *– do not have direct access to children – i.e. administration, chefs, cleaners etc*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **POSITION** | **QUALIFICATIONS** |
| Claudia Fitzpatrick | Owner Manager | Level 9 |
| Claudia Fitzpatrick | Room Leader/ ABA Tutor ASD  | Level 9 |
| Alana Sweeney | Montessori TeacherASD assistant | Level 6 |
| Linda O’Connor | ABA Tutor, Teaching Assistant/Room Leader Montessori | Level 9 |
| Marie BrukeCatherine Gourley | Montessori TeacherMontessori Teacher | Level 6Level 6 |
| Joanne Hope | BCBA Tutor | Level 9 |
| Vita Kapteine | Special Needs Assistant | Level 6 |
| Helena SmitElaine Murphy |  SNA ASD Tutor/ Montessori Teacher. | Level 6Level 7 |

**Name/Signed: Claudia Fitzpatrick Date: 06/08/2024.**

**Person responsible for approving the Policy**

**15. CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Document Title:** | **Child Safeguarding Statement** |
| **Document Author:** | **Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk, CB** |
| **Document Approved:** | **Claudia Fitzpatrick** |
| **Date the Document is Effective From:** | **September 2020** |
| **Scheduled Review Date:** | **06/08/2024** |
| **Number of Pages:** | **14** |

**Type of Service**

Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk is a Sessional Service in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

This Service is privately owned by Claudia Fitzpatrick

**Key Personnel: In-House**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Manager (Person in charge):** | Claudia Fitzpatrick |
| **Deputy in the absence of Manager:** | Marie Bruke/ Lynda O’Connor |
| **Health and Safety Officer:** | Claudia Fitzpatrick |
| **Fire Officer:** | Claudia Fitzpatrick |
| **First Aid Co-ordinator:** | Marie Bruke/Helena Smit |
| **Designated Liaison Officer:** | Claudia Fitzpatrick |
| **Deputy Designated Liaison Officer:** | Lynda O’Connor/ Marie Bruke. |
| **Data Controller:** | Claudia Fitzpatrick |

**KEY INFORMATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Opening Hours:**  | 8:45am-11:45am (Sessional)9am-1pm (Autistic Unit) |
| **No of Weeks per year:** | 38 |
| **Capacity:**  | 22 |
| **No. of children currently attending the Service:** | 20 registered (Sessional)6 (Autistic Unit) |
| **Age Range:**  | 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and 6 months (Sessional)3 years to 6 years (Autistic Unit) |
| **Ratios:** | 2.8 – 5.6 Years 1:113 – 6 Years 4:6 |
| **Curriculum/Learning Ethos:** | Montessori (Sessional)Playbased (Autistic Unit) |
| **Address:** | 2 Coleman Crescent, Lusk Village, Co Dublin |
| **Phone Number:** | 087 2958661 |
| **Email:** | bambis\_land@yahooo.ie |

**Key Personnel: External**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TUSLA Early Years Inspection Team:** **Contact:**  | Dublin North, Early Years Inspectorate, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin01 8708018 |
| **TUSLA Social Work Department:****Contact:** | Child and Family Agency, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park,Swords, Co. Dublin01 8708000 |
| **Garda:****Contact:** | Lusk Garda Station01 8437222 |
| **Doctor:****Contact:** | Primacare, Lusk01 8954030 |
| **Pharmacist:****Contact:** | McCabes Pharmacy, Lusk01 8431100 |
| **Hospital:****Contact:**  | Beaumont Hospital01 8093000 |
| **Fire Brigade:** | 999 / 112 |
| **Fire Maintenance:****Contact:**  | Total Fire Protection, John Chaney086 6090127 |
| **Pest Control:****Contact:**  | Fingal Pest Control01 8404993 |
| **Garda Vetting:****Contact:**  | Barnardos, 021 4547060The Teaching Council, 01 6517900 |

**Principles**

Our priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends our service. The safety and welfare of the child is paramount to us. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review out guiding principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures every 24 months at least.

We understand fully that the safeguarding of children is every adult’s responsibility. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, to be listened to and to be heard.

We understand that all children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background. Therefore, we are committed to ensure that all children in Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in our care. We do this by:

* Making sure that our staff and students are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
* Having procedures readily in place to recognise, respond to and report concerns in relation to children’s protection and welfare.
* Making sure all staff are Garda vetted prior to engagement.
* Having clear Codes of Behaviour for management, staff and students in the form of a Handbook.
* Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents.
* Giving parents/guardians, children and staff information about what we do and what to expect from us.
* Letting parents/guardians and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is something that they are not happy about. Having a procedure to respond to these complaints.
* Having a clear reporting procedure to be followed should a staff member have a concern about a child in line with the obligations of Mandated persons outlined in *Children First (2017) and The Children First Act 2015.*
* Having a procedure to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect against staff members.
* Having a system where the policy and safeguarding statement is reviewed annually at least by the Management, or as regularly as is required following any changes or updates.

**Risk Assessment**

All potential risks have a relevant procedure to manage the risks as outlined below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **RISK IDENTIFIED** | **PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MANAGE RISK**  | **RESPONSIBILITY** |
| **1.Risk of harm (as defined by The Children First Act) of bullying a child by a member of staff/peer***Examples of risk include, but are not limited to: Repeated acts of bullying (i.e. verbal or psychological) in the form of taunting, criticising, slagging, humiliating, excluding etc.* *Children using social media platforms to post derogatory or harmful threats or comments, or unauthorised photographs of other children. Unwanted texts or calls to a child’s personal device.* | **Procedures in place:**Anti-bullying Policy Internet, Photography and Recording Devices Policy. Parents are aware of Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy and their responsibilities. No use of mobile phones permitted by staff inside care rooms (safe storage is provided), with the exception of the Owners’ mobile phoneStaff Training in Child Safeguarding Supervision of Children Policy (awareness of any area blind-spots and enhanced supervision of these)Discipline and Complaints Procedure. No Child or Phones/Devices Policy  | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **2. Risk of harm (as defined by The Children First Act) of sexual abuse or abuse of a child within the setting (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) by a member of staff/student or peer/visitor/contractor***Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:* *Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision.* *Children being harmed because of staff not reporting appropriate concerns.* *Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff. –**An incident of sexual abuse by a staff member/student, for example, during nappy changing or intimate care routines.*  | **Procedures in place:** Vetting in place to include Garda vetting, police checks, validated references. Supervision of Children Policy (awareness of any area blind-spots and enhanced supervision of these).Child Safeguarding Statement and PolicyNo unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel. Staff are trained to recognise signs and aware of mandated requirement to report. Staff trained in Child Safeguarding (Children First) and aware of types and signs. DLPs appointed.Student or unqualified staff not permitted to carry out Nappy Changing or Toileting Assistance. Parents/Guardians/Siblings not permitted into Toilet or Nappy Changing Facilities. Mandated persons named and listed. Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be arranged by appointment only and when children are not present. | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **3. Risk of harm (as Defined by The Children First Act) or physical / psychological/ emotional harm (as defined by the Children First Act 2015) of a child by a member of staff /Contractor***Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Rough handling of children by staff in a way that causes harm to a child.**Staff shouting at or chastising children to the extent that it causes harm to a child.* | **Procedures in place:**Vetting in place to include Garda vetting, police checks, validated references. No unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel. Staff are trained to recognise signs and aware of mandated requirement to report. Staff trained in child Safeguarding n (Children First). DLPs appointed.Supervision of Children Policy (awareness of any area blind-spots and enhanced supervision of these).Child Safeguarding Policy Managing Behaviour Policy in place. Positive Reinforcement Skills and Strategies only used. Staff trained in evidence-based behaviour management strategiesStaff Supports available for managing specifically challenging behaviours.Mandated persons named and listed.Disciplinary Procedure. Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be by appointment only and arranged when children are not present (out-of-hours) | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **4.Risk of harm (as Defined by The Children First Act) of a child from an unauthorised Visitor/ Contractor** *Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision**Risk of children absconding from services due to procedures for entering and exiting buildings not being adhered to, such as doors being closed etc.**Risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to children from visitors* | Supervision of Children Procedure/Policy (no unsupervised access to children by visitors or contractors)Visitor Signing in Procedure/Policy Child Safeguarding PolicyNo unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel.Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be arranged by appointment only and when children are not present. | Management, staff, DLPs |
| **5. Lost child***Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Risk of children absconding from services due to procedures for entering and exiting buildings not being adhered to, such as doors being closed etc.**Risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to children from strangers* *Children placed at risk of harm due to inadequate supervision* | **Procedures in place** Missing Child Policy in place and followed.Fully secured Entrance and Exit points.Risk Assessments and Safety Audits carried out.Critical Incident Plan in place. DLPs appointed. Only authorised Persons allowed access to the service. | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **6.Accidents Caused by Neglect** *Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Child tripping or falling due to unnoticed hazards.**Accidentally ingestion of a hazardous substance due to poor storage and accessibility.**Choking as a result of being left unattended while eating.* | **Procedures in place** Safety Policy and Statement in place and followed. Daily Risk Assessments (Manager’s Morning Check and Care Room Risk Assessments) carried out. Monthly and annual Safety Audits carried out. Risk Assessments carried out following an accident and corrective action taken.Close Supervision during all mealtimes (and awareness of any area blind-spots and enhanced supervision of these). Accident and Incident Policy in place and followed. Correct storage procedures for all potentially hazardous substances (cleaning and medications). | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **7.Medical Neglect***Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Accidentally ingestion of a hazardous substance due to poor storage and accessibility.**Failure to administer required medication to a child.* *Failure to follow care plans for a child.*  | **Procedures in place** Medicines Policy in place and followed. Parental Consent Forms signed.Individual Child Care/Emergency Plans are in place and followed. Inaccessible safe storage and labelling of Medicines in place. | Management, staff, DLPs |
| **8.Child not collected/ Unauthorised collection and Access Rights or Persons unfit to collect** *Risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to children from strangers or unauthorised care persons.**Children placed at risk of harm due to inadequate supervision or care capabilities of unauthorised persons.*  | **Procedures in place** Collections Policy in place and followed.Authorised/Emergency Collectors available. Parental Agreements & Permissions in place.Photo Identification Requests in place for emergency collectors.Child Registration Form fully completed with emergency contacts and authorisations listed. Amendments made to Authorised Collection List, as necessary. Children are not released to unauthorised persons. Where there is a dispute between parents, we will seek legal clarification regarding access and may require copies of a court order (Request in Child Reg Form).If we have never met a parent and a parent is not listed on the registration form, we may seek clarification of identity from parent/guardian before engaging with the collector, and subsequently photographic identification once clarity is sought. Children will not be released to parents/guardians who are in an unfit state. Alternative Authorised person will be contacted, or Gardai will be phoned.  | Management, staff, DLPs |
| **9. Unvetted Staff or students that may lead to children being harmed (including not recognising or reporting signs of abuse)** *Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision* *Children being harmed as a result of staff not reporting appropriate concerns* *Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff* | **Procedures in place** Recruitment and Selection Policy in place.Garda Vetting Policy in place (Process to Fully completed before commencement of work). No unsupervised access to children by unvetted persons (or vetted students/visitors/contractors)Relevant validated References available for all staff. Child Safeguarding Policy in place. Risk Assessment of Disclosures on Garda Vetting forms completed if required.  | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **10.Risk of abuse by staff/visitors not knowing correct procedures (such as not recognising or reporting signs of abuse)** *Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision* *Children being harmed as a result of staff not reporting appropriate concerns* *Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff* | Staff Training Procedure/PolicyStaff Supervision Procedure/PolicyReporting Procedure/PolicyChild Safeguarding Procedure/Policy Allegations of Abuse against Staff/Students Procedure/PolicyComplaints Procedure/PolicyCode of Behaviour for staff Procedures/PolicyProcedure/Policy on Managing BehaviourNo unsupervised access to children by students, visitors or any unvetted personnel. | Management, Staff, DLPs |
| **11.Poor behaviour strategies where the dignity of the child is undermined** *Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Rough handling of children by staff in a way that causes harm to a child.**Staff shouting at or chastising children to the extent that it causes harm to a child.**Exemption, humiliation or isolation methods used to behaviour manage.* | **Procedures in place** Managing Behaviour Policy in place and followed. Positive Reinforcement Skills and Strategies only used. No Corporal punishment. No isolation or exemption used. Disciplinary procedures. Professional assistance and support sought for very challenging behaviour Staff trained in evidence-based behaviour management strategies, example, Incredible Years.Management support provided to staff in relation to very challenging behaviour  | Management, staff, DLPs |
| **12. Access to inappropriate /harmful online internet sources.** *Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:* *Accidental exposure to children of inappropriate online material (violence/pornography)**Unauthorised sharing of images and information about a child.* *Poor management of images or recordings of children, including those shared publicly or on social media.* | **Procedures in place:**Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy.No use of mobile phones permitted by staff inside classrooms (safe storage is provided), with the exception of the Owners’ mobile phone Supervision of Children Policy. Staff Training in Online Safety.Parental Consent Forms completed. No images of children published externally or on social media No phones policy. Parents are aware of Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy and their responsibilities.  | Management, staff, DLPs |
| **13. Risk of harm of a child from unauthorised Photography in the setting***Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:**Unauthorised distribution of a photo of a child on social media or other platforms.* *Poor management of images or recordings of children, including those shared publicly or on social media* | **Procedures:**No use of mobile phones permitted by staff inside classrooms (safe storage is provided), with the exception of the Owners’ mobile phoneInternet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy.Staff Training in Online Safety. No phones policy. Parents are aware of Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy and their responsibilities.Social Media Procedure/PolicyRetention of Records Procedure/Policy | Management, staff, DLPs |

**Responsibility**

The Manager / DLP, **Claudia Fitzpatrick**, is fully responsible for ensuring the above risks are managed.

**Procedures**

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance* and Tusla’s *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

* Procedures to manage any risk identified.
* Procedure for reporting harm or abuse or allegations of these to Tusla by the as provider Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool Lusk or member of staff (whether mandated or not).
* Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers of a child while attending our service.

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* Procedure for selection or recruitment of any person as a member of staff of the provider with regards to that person’s suitability to work with children.
* Procedure for the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training to members of staff in relation to the occurrence of harm.
* Procedure for maintain a list of mandated people.

* Procedure for the appointment of a relevant person for the purposes of this statement who is **Claudia Fitzpatrick**

**This Safeguarding Statement will be displayed Prominently**

**Implementation**

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our Service is fully committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every *twelve months* or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on August 2022 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: CF (Provider) Date: 06/08/2024.

**Name**: Claudia Fitzpatrick **Tel: 0872958661.**

**Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015**

**Name**...................................................................**Tel**.....................................................

**For further information on this Statement please contact the named Relevant Person:**

**RELEVANT PERSON NAME: Claudia Fitzpatrick**

**CONTACT: 087 2958661**