

1. Child Protection Policy Statement

We, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience for those taking part in education or community outreach activities, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children 2015.

We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selecting staff
- Managing and supervising staff
- Involvement of primary carers
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

This policy was reviewed on 16th April 2021 and found to be in line with best practice. It will be reviewed again on **6th January 2022**.

[Signed by Designated Person] _____



Date: _____ 16.04.21 _____

2. Code of Behaviour for Staff

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

- Child-centred approach
- Good practice
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Physical contact
- Health and safety

Child-centred approach

- Treat all children and young people equally, regardless of background or circumstance
- Listen to and respect children and young people
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability). ICO are committed to positive approach to outreach and education and this should be reflected in facilitation.
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed. Strive for artistic excellence BUT ensure that your expectations meet the abilities of the group.
- Treat all children and young people as individuals
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session
- Encourage feedback from group
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
- Lead by example
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation

Good practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact)
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person (**Kathrine Barnecutt**) and follow reporting procedures
- When working in a school environment any concerns MUST be reported immediately to teacher in charge and Principal. Staff should ensure that these concerns have been responded to sufficiently.
- When working with children / vulnerable adults, a teacher or second supervisor MUST always be present. If staff in host organisation / school do not comply with this, please inform your Designated Person.
- Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy.
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis.
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers
- Report and record any incidents and accidents
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residentials
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing'
- Don't let a problem get out of control – Discuss any concerns with your supervisor (**Kathrine Barnecutt**)
- Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Inappropriate behaviour

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

Physical contact

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

Health and safety

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

3. Reporting Procedures

Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare

Kathrine Barnecutt has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

Kathrine Barnecutt can be contacted at Irish Chamber Orchestra, University of Limerick on **Tel. No. 061 23 4643** or email kbarnecuttsos@gmail.com

In the event that Kathrine Barnecutt cannot be contacted for **Sing Out with Strings** matters please contact

Annina Ahola aneahola@gmail.com **Tel no. 086 193 6989** who is the deputy designated liaison person for Sing Out with Strings.

In all other matters **Cathriona Murphy** has been designated as deputy to Kathrine Barnecutt and can be contacted at Irish Chamber Orchestra, University of Limerick on **Tel. No. 061 202351** or email Cathriona.Murphy@ul.ie.

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

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

Recording procedures

The Irish Chamber Orchestra has an 'Incident Book' in place (**located in locked cabinet, 1st floor office, Education Desk**) in order to record any concerns about the protection of children or young people. This book is maintained by Kathrine Barnecutt and will be stored securely in order to maintain confidentiality. This book can only be accessed by those directly involved in lodging a concern regarding a child or young person. This can be done by contacting **Kathrine Barnecutt** at **the Irish Chamber Orchestra** on **Tel. No. 061 234632** or **email kbarnecuttsos@gmail.com** Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

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

Dealing with a disclosure

Within a host organisation eg. school / hospital, relevant host staff should be informed immediately and deal directly with incident in the first instance.

St Mary's NS: DLP Principal Mary Hanley: Deputy DLP Marion Kennedy

Le Cheile NS: Anthony Fitzgerald: Deputy Eoghan O Byrne.

However, if a complaint is raised when the Irish Chamber Orchestra is the host organisation the following procedure should be followed:

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say;
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details;
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

Reporting procedures

In any matters relating to a child/young person's safety and welfare, employees should speak directly to **designated person Kathrine Barnecutt or if unavailable deputy designated persons Aninna Ahola at Sing Out with Strings or Cathriona Murphy.**

- The person who expresses the concern will be involved and kept informed;
- Actions and outcomes will be noted;
- All details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts will be recorded in Incident Book. Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts;

- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk;
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement)

4. Confidentiality statement

We in the Irish Chamber Orchestra are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances);
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/ young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

4. Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary);
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Candidates will be required to submit a CV;
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form **AND** complete the Garda Vetting process
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary;
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
- Some of the exclusions would include:
 - any child-related convictions;
 - refusal to submit references and declaration form;
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
 - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance.

Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that:

New staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session;
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
- Undergo a probationary or trial period.

All staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
- Be provided with child protection training.

5. Involvement of primary carers

Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

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

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

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

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

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

6. Dealing with allegations against staff

Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person **The DLP from the Hosting school or Kathrine Barnecutt** will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made **Kathrine Barnecutt** will deal with issues related to the staff member when in a hosting school situation, Cathriona Murphy will deal with issues .
 - The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
 - If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted;
 - The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner;
 - The staff member will be informed as soon as possible
 - ° of the nature of the allegation;
 - ° the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond;
 - The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
 - Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí;
 - After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

7. Complaints and comments procedures

In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within 4 weeks;
- **Kathrine Barnecutt** has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

8. Accidents procedure

Accidents procedure

- The organisation must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation;
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
- External organisations with whom your organisation has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;
- First-aid boxes should be available and regularly re-stocked;
- The location of the first-aid box(es) must be made known to staff; **Kitchen (Ground Floor, 1st Cupboard)**
- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff; **(Locked cabinet, 1st Floor, Education Desk)**
- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material;
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk;
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.
- First aid pack kept in car of DLP Kathrine Barnecutt for use off-site visits and camps.
- Spare first aid pack to be taken by deputy DLP.

