

SPLEODAR HALLOWEEN ARTS FESTIVAL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

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SPLEODAR HALLOWEEN ARTS FESTIVAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

We, the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival, are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children.

We have implemented procedures covering:

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

This policy has been reviewed in October 2018.

Signed _____
Eva Birdthistle, Designated Officer

Date: _____

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ALL STAFF

Child-centred approach

Good practice

Inappropriate behavior

Physical contact

Health and Safety

CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH

The Spleodar Halloween Arts festival undertakes to:

- Treat all children and young people equally;
- 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);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- 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 and their primary carers;
- Encourage feedback from group;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware 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

The Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival will implement the following procedures and practices:

- Register each child (name, address, phone, special requirements, emergency contact) if no parent present at workshops.
- The organisation has identified a designated person & deputy designated person for reports (see later in report for person's details);
- 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, mentally and physically;
- Report concerns to the Designated Person and follow the procedures detailed in this statement;

- Organisations should have an anti-bullying policy. Encourage children and young people to report bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy;
- Observe appropriate dress and behavior;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record 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;
- Ensure clear communication between artists and the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival;
- Will be proactive in relation to concerns to prevent a problem escalating out of control;
- Where possible, the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival will avoid sessions under the control of one person. Where this is not possible, sessions will be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers;
- Staff of Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival will not transport children/young persons;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have 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 organizational 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 touching;
- 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.

DESIGNATED PERSON

Eva Birdthistle 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.

Eva Birdthistle can be contacted at 067 34400

Deputy Designated Person is Catherine Walsh 067 34400

GROUNDINGS FOR CONCERN

The following constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- Specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- 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;
- Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

In the event of a disclosure by a child / young person staff should;

- Stay calm and listen to the child, 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 but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Don't make the child repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Explain to the child what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

RECORDING PROCEDURES

All concerns arising in the area of children's / young persons' welfare should be recorded in the Child Protection Incident Book which will be under the sole control of the Chairman, Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival.

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

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

REPORTING PROCEDURES

See the **SPLEODAR HALLOWEEN ARTS FESTIVAL:CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM - 2018**

- The reporting procedure should be known and accessible to all staff.
- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed.

Staff involved in any incident should immediately:

- Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts in the incident book. (Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts).
- Inform the Designated Person or the Deputy Designated Person. If either is unavailable the most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child 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 confidentiality statement).
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the Designated Person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive. Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;
- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly.

Duty Social Worker Department Tel. 067 – 46660

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

The Gardaí are contactable at: **Nenagh District HQ 067 – 50450**

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

We in the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival 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 at further risk;
- Images of a child 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.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING STAFF

'Staff' refers to persons participating in the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival as volunteers, presenters or performers.

Given the current scale of the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival, all festival planning, organisation and management is handled by the members of the Committee and a small number of local volunteers, **all of whom are well known to the committee.**

Nevertheless, all persons involved with the festival will be made fully aware of the policies and procedures relating to the welfare/safety of children/young persons with whom they will have contact in the context of festival events. All workshop providers & committee will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and all other volunteers where time permits, otherwise Volunteers will be given roles in public spaces, such as Fireworks & Parade.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF PRIMARY CARERS

'Primary Carer' refers to parent(s), carer(s), or responsible adult(s) as appropriate.

The Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival is 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 will 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 and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child 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.

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT OR ABUSE BY STAFF

If an allegation is made against any person associated with the Spleodar Halloween Arts festival two separate procedures will be followed:

1. In respect of the child the Designated Person, Eva Birdthistle, will deal with issues related to the child.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Eva Birdthistle, will deal with issues related to the staff member.
 - 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 'Reporting Procedures' 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 given the opportunity to respond 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 Chairman will advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within 2 weeks;
- Eva Birdthistle has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

ACCIDENTS PROCEDURE

- The organisation will maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in festival events if no parent is present;
- Children/young people's details will be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
- External organisations with which the Spleodar Halloween Arts Festival has dealings will be required to 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;
 - Reception – Large wall mounter

- Technicians Room – Large wall mounted
 - Dance Studio – Green case
 - Kitchen – Green case
 - Marketing Office – Green case
 - Administration Office – Green case
- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation’s Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff;
 - Children and young people will be advised of risks of dangerous materials and/or locations.
 - Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk.
 - Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off site-trips.

Appendix 1: Definitions of abuse

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

1. Neglect

“Neglect can be defined as being where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care....The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.”
(Children First p.31)

2. Emotional abuse

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

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

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

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

Examples of emotional abuse in children or vulnerable people include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s or or vulnerable person’ parent/carer;

- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child or vulnerable person;
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's or vulnerable person's capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way;
- Under or over-protection of the child or vulnerable person;
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline;
- Exposure to domestic violence.

3. Physical abuse

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

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

4. Sexual abuse

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

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child or vulnerable person;
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child or vulnerable person whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or involvement of the child or vulnerable person in an act of masturbation;
- Sexual intercourse with a child or vulnerable person whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- Sexual exploitation of a child or vulnerable person ... may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse;
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age or vulnerable person.