

# Artlink Child Protection Policy

## Contents

Pg1 Overview of guiding principles

Pg2 Working Safely with Children

- Child centered approach
- Measures to be taken
- Inappropriate behavior
- Health and Safety
- Physical contact
- Confidentiality Statement

Pg4 Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns and Allegation of Abuse or Misconduct

- Definition of Child Abuse
- Reasonable Grounds for Concern
- Procedures for recording incidents and concerns
- Dealing with a disclosure
- Reporting Procedures
- Contact Information
- Dealing with allegations against workers/volunteers
- Dealing with Retrospective Child Abuse Alegations

Pg7 Recruitment

Pg8 Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

Pg 9 Review

Appendices

Health and Safety Policy

Anti Bullying Policy

Photographic permission

Child Registration Booking Form

Accident procedure

# Child Protection and Welfare Statement

Artlinks guiding principles are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and current legislation such as the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.

Our guiding principles apply to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee/board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures. We will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

The Designated Liaison Person is a member of the organisation who has undergone specific training in Child Protection and has responsibility for the raising of awareness and reporting of these issues. Designated Liaison Person for Artlink is Martha McCulloch

This Policy will be reviewed in November 2023

We provide the following services/activities to children and young people:

- Art workshops
- Exhibitions
- Community events

Artlink believes that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are paramount. We believe that all children attending our service have the right to be

- Protected
- treated with respect
- listened to and to have their views taken into consideration in all decisions affecting them by having and implementing procedures covering:
  - Working Safely with Children
  - Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns and Allegation of Abuse or Misconduct
  - Recruitment
  - Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers
  - Anti Bullying Policy
  - Photographic permission
  - Child Registration Booking Form

## Working Safely With Children

### Artlink supports a child centred approach in the following ways:

- When children are on the premises with their parents or persons in loco parentis, children are the sole responsibility of these aforementioned adults who must ensure an adequate level of supervision and control.

Treat all children and young people equally

- Listen to and respect children and young people
- Involve children / young people in decision making appropriate to their age and Ability.
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use language appropriate to the situation / workshop
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Respect the artwork produced by each individual
- Treat all children and young people as individuals
- Respect a child's / Young person's space
- Have contracts/ agreements with group based on discussion of appropriate behaviours and ability
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids/materials
- Encourage feedback from group
- Lead by example
- Be aware of a child/young person's time limitations e.g. school/exams when scheduling activities
- Know the young people (in the case of medical information or limitations) • Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation

### When working with children and young people Artlink will undertake the following measures:

- Plan and be sufficiently prepared both mentally and physically

Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact)

- Make parents/carers/responsible adults, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Have emergency procedures in place and advise all staff of these
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs
- Report any concerns to Designated Liaison Person and follow reporting procedures
- Artlink has an anti-bullying policy. We encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns and worries and to be aware of the anti-bullying policy
- Ask that artists/ assistants observe appropriate dress and behaviour
- Evaluate our work practices on a regular basis
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers
- Report/record any incidents and accidents
- Ensure proper supervision including adequate ratios depending on age, abilities and activities involved
- Ensure clear communication between the artist and Artlink
- Don't 'not do anything' in relation to concerns
- Don't let a problem get out of control

- **Artlink will ensure artists do not take sessions on their own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of parents /carers /responsible adult**

### **Inappropriate behaviour**

- Don't use / 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 in any form
- Don't hit or physically chastise children or young people
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people e.g. outside of structured organisational activities

### **Health & Safety**

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

### **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

### **Confidentiality statement**

We in Artlink 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 are in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people;
- Procedures are in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

Personal Information relating to a child/young person and /or reports to Tusla will be kept in a locked metal filing cabinet, and the only key holder will be the Designated Liaison Person

# Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns and Allegation of Abuse or Misconduct

## Definitions of Child Abuse

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

For detailed information see <https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/definitions-of-child-abuse/>

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.

## Reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from a child that he/she was abused
- A statement from a person who witnessed abuse.
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
- A symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

A suspicion which is not supported by any objective sign of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion, or reasonable grounds for concern.

## Procedures for recording incidents and concerns:

If child abuse is suspected or alleged, the following steps should be taken by Artlink and members of the public who come into contact with children.

Artlink contracted staff/ should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

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

## Dealing with a disclosure:

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what he/she 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 details unnecessarily.
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next ( explanation should be age-appropriate)

### Reporting Procedures:

Martha McCulloch has been designated by the board of Artlink 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 her responsibility 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 Liaison Person to liaise with Tusla or Gardaí where appropriate. Any person who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Designated Liaison Person. (This includes Volunteers, Assistants, Artists, Contracted Workers, CE Scheme workers, Board)

The Designated Liaison Person at Artlink is Martha McCulloch 0863080313 [marthamcculloch@icloud.com](mailto:marthamcculloch@icloud.com)  
The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Rebecca Strain 0864532428 [becca\\_strain@hotmail.com](mailto:becca_strain@hotmail.com)

- Artlink will record all details including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts in an incident book. Information recorded should be factual and any opinions should be supported by facts.
- The person who expresses the concern will be involved and kept informed.
- Actions and outcomes will be noted.
- The Designated Liaison Person or Deputy will be informed.
- The most appropriate person will discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults will 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 Liaison Person may contact Tusla for an informal consultation prior to making a report.
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis as per our confidentiality statement.
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern, the Designated Liaison Person will contact Tusla. Reports may be made verbally initially to Tusla and then followed up with the standard reporting form. Reports will be made without delay.
- If the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person are not available, Artlink will contact Tusla directly.
- In case of emergencies outside of Tusla's hours, Artlink will contact the Gardai. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardai.

### Contact Information:

Tusla  
Child and Family Agency,  
Ground Level,  
Scally Place,  
Justice Walsh Road,  
Letterkenny  
Co. Donegal  
074 9123672

Buncrana Garda Station  
Mc Carter's Road,  
Ardaravan,  
Buncrana,  
Co. Donegal  
(074) 932 054

## Dealing with allegations against workers/volunteers

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person, the Designated Liaison Person will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made the Deputy Designated Liaison Person will deal with issues related to the worker/volunteer
  - The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
  - If allegations are made against the Designated Liaison Person, then the Deputy Designated Liaison Person should be contacted;
  - The reporting procedures outlined in the guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and the child/young person should be informed of the actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age appropriate manner;
  - The worker/volunteer will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and be given opportunity to respond;
  - The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
  - Any action following an allegation of abuse against a worker/volunteer should be taken in consultation with Tusla and Gardaí;
  - After consultation, the chairperson/head of the organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

## Dealing with Retrospective Child Abuse Alegations

The term retrospective abuse refers to abuse that an adult experienced that took place during their childhood. In terms of retrospective abuse, a report needs to be made to Tusla where there may be a current or potential risk to children from the person against whom there is an allegation.

In this instance the procedure is for the Designated Liaison Person to contact Tusla and complete their Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF)

## Recruitment

Artlink will ensure that contracted workers 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 role paid and voluntary.
- Posts will be advertised widely
- We will endeavor to select the most suitably qualified personnel.
- Candidates will be required to provide a CV
- If appropriate for example if the candidate will be working with under 18's they will be required to complete Garda Vetting
- Contracted workers will be selected by a panel of at least two representatives through an interview process.
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed.
- Some of the exclusions would include:
  - o Any child related convictions:
  - o Refusal to partake in Child Protection Training as offered by Artlink.



## Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

When children are on the premises with their parents or persons in local parentis, children are the sole responsibility of these aforementioned adults who must ensure an adequate level of supervision and control.

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

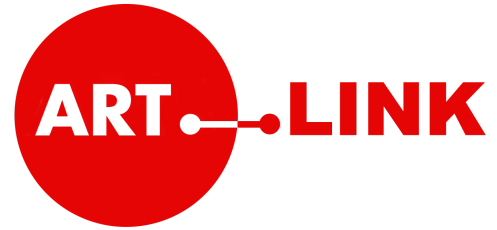
- Contact Tusla and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers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

## Review

This document and its appendices should be reviewed by the board every 24 months or more often if there is any change in the services that the organisation provides.

Date of last review: 15th November 2023

## Appendices



Artlink CLG  
Fort Dunree  
Linsfort  
Buncrana  
County Donegal  
F93 C424

### HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Artlink is committed to ensuring, in so far as it is reasonably practicable, that all our employees/users are fully protected in terms of health, safety and welfare. Furthermore, we regard ourselves as having a high degree of responsibility for the safety of customers, members of the general public and persons engaged in work at our premises. In pursuit of this, we make every endeavor:

1. To provide conditions of work for all which positively precludes any danger to health. This means that the highest standards of safety and hygiene will be identified and enforced.
2. To ensure that all equipment is in a fit state and is properly maintained. To this end, proper inspection and maintenance routines will be followed and enforced by management with specific responsibilities for the adherence to such standards. No equipment will knowingly be used which presents a risk to the safety of our employees/clients. Constant attention will be paid to the provision of unobstructed means of escape in case of emergency.
3. To ensure the welfare of individuals will be the concern of all management and that the provisions will be under continuous review.

The Project Coordinator is the designated Health and Safety Officer. The First Aiders in Artlink are:

- Tadhg Taylor, Artlink Team member

It should be noted that the main First Aid Kit is located in the Artlink Office.

In case of fire or any other type of emergency of this nature, staff, members of the public, etc., must follow the Emergency Fire Exit Signage and meet in the Fort Dunree car park.

***Artlink will examine legislation and will foster training and the issue of information on health and safety matters on an ongoing basis.***

## Anti Bullying Policy

Artlink provides a place where

- every participant/ facilitator can feel secure.
- it is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour.
- name calling is not tolerated.
- no one suffers abuse of any kind.
- no one is victimised.
- each participant/ facilitator is supported and listened to.
- it is each person's responsibility to ensure they are treated equally.

## Photographic permission

Artlink documents workshops and workshop participants for our records, for reports and for press, social media and publicity opportunities. When images of Participants are used in the above, it is Artlink policy not to name any of the participants individually.

All participants in an Artlink workshop will be asked for their permission before photographic documentation is taken, and participants can refuse permission if wished.

Name of Group:

Date:

Name of Participant:

Permission granted: Not granted:

I agree/do not agree that all Photographic work completed during the project may be used for publication on the Artlink website, social media and/or annual reports.

Agree:

Do not agree:

Thank you.

## ARTLINK CHILD REGISTRATION BOOKING FORM

CHILDS NAME:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT:

PHONE: (H) (M)

Has your child any medical conditions or allergies. \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick this box if you consent to your child's photograph being taken and used in the workshop and for future publicity material

Places are limited so advanced booking is advised.

Artlink has in place guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures which is an essential Arts Council funding requirement.

Thank you for booking a course with Artlink

I have read Artlink's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures as outlined above and I agree to abide by the terms and conditions therein.

Signed:

Date:

Signed:

Date:

Staff Artist/Facilitator Assistant Volunteer

## Accidents procedure

- Artlink will maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in attending Artlink programmes
- Children and young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and contact register where appropriate.
- External organisations with whom our organisation has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance; Artlink's Public Liability policy no is: DN RCR 3162658
- First-aid boxes are available and regularly re-stocked;
- The location of the first-aid boxes must be made known to staff; currently on the shelf in the main office. Artlink will maintain training for the nominated first-aider, an Artlink staff member.
- Availability of the first-aid boxes should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff; currently on the shelf in the main office.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken in relation to the use of certain materials by children and young people.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken in relation to the handling of any equipment and tools used at Artlink.
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trip

## Review

This document and its appendices should be reviewed by the board every 24 months or more often if there is any change in the services that the organisation provides.