

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introductory Statement

The Staff and Management Committee of Waterford Teachers' Centre have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. Children First 2011- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs)
2. Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post primary Schools.
3. Circular 0065/2011 (Department of Education and Skills).
4. Child Protection and Welfare Handbook (National Office for Children and families Services) 5. Child Protection Guidelines for persons employed by the Department of Education and Science (2007).
6. Procedures for Responding to Allegations of child Abuse Brought to the Attention of Staff Employed by the Department of Education and Skiffs (October 2010)

For the purposes of this policy a "child" is any person under the age of 18 years who is not/has not been married (as defined in *Children First*)

An individual copy of this policy document will be made available to all staff and members of the Management Committee and the texts referenced above are available in our library.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with this document and to be aware of their duties and specific responsibilities.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- ✚ Create a safe environment for all users of our Centre and for the participants in any activities organised by the Centre
- ✚ Develop an awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the staff and Management Committee of the Centre
- ✚ Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children (engaged in Centre related activities) and staff
- ✚ Ensure that all staff are aware of *Children First* and the guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and /or disclosures of child abuse
- ✚ Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all staff

Procedures

- ✚ All staff in the Centre will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in *Children First* and the Department of Education and Skills *Child Protection Procedures*.
- ✚ The Management Committee of the Waterford Teachers' Centre has appointed Celia Walsh as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Breda Halley as the Deputy DLP.
 - ✚ Each of these persons has received training in Child Protection.
 - ✚ The name of the DLP will be displayed in a prominent position near the entrance to the Education Centre
- ✚ The Management Committee of Waterford Teachers' Centre will engage in safe procedures for the Recruitment of Staff and volunteers.
- ✚ As and from the commencement of this policy all potential staff will be asked as part of their application process to sign a Child Protection Statutory Declaration (DES Procedures). Documentation such as driver's license or Passport will also be asked for to confirm identity.
- ✚ It is acknowledged that no matter how good recruitment and selection procedures are they are not foolproof, so practices to ensure good management and supervision of staff will also be adhered to.
- ✚ The Staff and Management have agreed that:
 1. All concerns/disclosures involving child protection /child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (or Deputy DLP if appropriate).
 2. Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report.
 3. A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality will be maintained. (Information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a "need to know basis".)
 4. The Management Committee will be informed if a referral is been made by the DLP

The DLP will file all reports confidentially and will fulfil their responsibilities in relation to these concerns as laid out in *Children First* and *Procedures for Responding to Allegations of child Abuse Brought to the Attention of Staff Employed by the Department of Education and Skills (October 2010)*.

Practices

The staff and management of Waterford Teachers' Centre have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the Staff and Management Committee have agreed the following practices to be adopted:

Visits by Children to the Centre or to Centre Activities in an Outside Venue

- All children (individual or in groups) visiting the Centre should be accompanied by a teacher (during school day) or parent/guardian and directly supervised.
- Children should not be left unattended in the Centre or in the car park of the Centre.
- Risk-taking behaviour is not allowed.
- If a group of children are visiting the Centre then the same ratio of adults to children in the group should apply as would apply in the school-setting or on any school outing. All groups of children must be accompanied by adults.
- The adults accompanying the children should be made aware that they are responsible for the safety, supervision and wellbeing of the children, while on the premises. This includes the supervision of safe toileting.
- The same guidelines apply if any external group (other than a school) is bringing children into the Centre
- Centre Staff are not responsible for supervising children but will draw to the attention of the accompanying adults if there is a breach of any of the above.
- The same procedures apply to activities arranged by the Centre in an outside venue.

Employees who are under the age of 18

The Centre follows stringently the guidelines laid down for such employment in **Protection of Young Persons Act 1996**

Special care is taken to ensure that any employees who are under the age of 18 are aware of our Child Protection Policy.

Persons under 18 years of age will not be left in sole charge of the Waterford Teachers' Centre.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Internet Safety Policy and our Health and Safety Statement which provide for the welfare and safety of all users of our premises.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Management Committee on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Management Committee will ensure that adequate training and information and support is provided for all staff and for members of the Management Committee.

This policy will be published on our Website so that all schools can have easy access to it.

This policy was put in place in January 2016 and is in line with Children First –National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

Adoption of Policy

Policy adopted by Management Committee on January 25th 2016.