



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Reviewed by Governance Sub-Committee Q1 2026

This policy has been written in line with the principles and definitions of the Children First document: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Children and Youth, 2017).

The main focus of the document is to ensure that in the course of our work, we are promoting the safety and well-being of children at all times, in line with our core values of dignity, respect and protection from harm.

CyberSafelreland (T/A CyberSafeKids – CSK) will ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to minimise the risk of harm to children in our programmes and activities.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This Policy applies to all staff, whatever their status, as part of their contractual obligations to CSK. It also applies to all volunteers who work with CSK or in CSK's name. The policy also applies to all those engaged, commissioned or contracted to work with CSK in any capacity.

Designated Child Protection Officer: Philip Arneill, Head of Communications & Research
(completed Designated Child Liaison training from Barnardos)

OVERVIEW

The Children First Act 2015 places specific obligations on organisations which provide services to children and young people, including the requirement to:

- Keep children safe from harm while they are using the services of CSK
- Carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while availing of the service
- Develop a Child Safeguarding statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified
- Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding statement

The following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place in CSK:

1. A Child Safeguarding statement (see appendix 1)
2. A fully trained Designated Child Protection Officer has been appointed (see appendix 1)
3. Garda Vetting is not required (see paragraph 2.2)
4. Child protection and welfare reporting procedures (See Section)
5. Induction check sheet (which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding statement and accompanying safeguarding policies and procedures)



6. All staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – Introduction to Children First Training.
7. Code of Ethics policy
8. Photography/filming policy included in Social Media Policy

The aim of these policies is to ensure that children attending our services are kept safe from harm and that all mandated persons working in our service are aware of their obligations and recognise signs of child abuse.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding statement which is on display in the centre.

Implementation and Review

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. CSK is committed to the implementation of this Child Protection Policy and the accompanying child safeguarding statement and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while using the services of CSK.

The Child Safeguarding statement will be reviewed **every 2 years** or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

This statement has been published on the CSK website It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with CSK . It is readily accessible to schools, parents and guardians on request. A copy of this statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

FOCUS OF POLICY

1. Staff conduct

- CSK expects all staff, volunteers, partners and consultants to conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity, respect and equality of every individual.
 - CSK's expectation is that all contact with children and young people (whether by phone, email, webinar or direct contact) should be supervised, accompanied, or at least in sight of other adults. We recognise that situations may arise where this cannot be the case for urgent or for practical reasons (i.e. where a teacher has to leave the classroom for a few moments) but in this case, the door to the classroom should be left wide open until the teacher's return. In the case of webinars and a teacher, for example, encountering technical difficulties, which impede or interrupt access to the session, the session should be recorded.
 - CSK further commits to ensuring webinars are a safe experience for children by ensuring that cameras remain off for the duration and that contact can only be made with the facilitator through the chat function.



2. Garda Vetting

- CSK has since 2016 sought Garda Vetting for any staff or contracted trainers who have direct contact with children from the Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB).
- In 2020 however, CSK was advised by the GNVB that since CSK's service is in the form of giving once off short presentations (1-4 hours in length) in schools, that it does not fit within the statutory framework of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, vetting was not required and that CSK could not be a registered organisation for this purpose.
- CSK were further advised that vetting only applies where there is "necessary and regular" access to or contact with children and CSK has therefore been advised by the GNVB that *"there is no legal requirement on CSK to have staff vetted to conduct presentations or talks at a school"*.
- The GNVB further noted that, *"Notwithstanding the above, an individual school may request vetting from CyberSafe Ireland, and in that circumstance, it is the determination of the GNVB that the vetting obligation rests with the school"*.

3. Safe Recruitment

- We will check potential staffs' employment history and at least two referees – including where relevant, referees that can testify to their suitability to work with children
- It is a condition of service that all staff, volunteers and consultants will work to this Child Protection Policy, to the safeguarding statement. Any breach of either this policy or the Safeguarding Statement is viewed as a contractual breach of conditions under which they work with CSK.

4. Education/Training

- In order that CSK can meet its commitments to safeguard children, it is essential that everyone associated with the organisation is clear about these commitments, the expectations CSK has of them, and what this means in practice. Creating an 'aware culture' in which all staff, volunteers and other representatives, including the Board of Directors, contribute to the protection of children and prevention of abuse is essential.
- CSK will support its representatives' understanding of child protection all by asking them to complete, at a minimum, the Tusla/HSE e-training 'An Introduction to Children First':
<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>. We will also ask those Board Members who have not yet done so, to complete the 90-minute course.
- Any new trainers will undergo training, support and mentoring from the Head of Education and will be asked to undergo relevant child protection training where possible and appropriate.

5. Disclosure: CSK Staff members, volunteers, trainers or others involved in CSK have a duty to report any concerns of harm to a child. Details of how this reporting procedure takes place are detailed below:



1: REPORTING PROCEDURE ARISING FROM IN-SCHOOL TRAINING: The staff member, volunteer, trainer or others who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns about a child should bring these concerns to the attention of the relevant school Designated Liaison Person (DLP) immediately and to the CSK DCPO. Information sharing should be done only on a need- to-know basis . However, given the complexity with these arrangements, both the school DLP and CKD DCPO would need to be advised on any disclosure.

Where the DLP considers that a child protection or welfare concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern criteria outlined below, then the DLP can refer to Tusla and the staff member, volunteer, trainer may need to assist the DLP with regards to providing information. The CSK DCPO is available to assist wherever necessary.

2: REPORTING PROCEDURE IN ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES:

- a. Where the above situation does not apply, any staff member, volunteer, trainer or others who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns about a child should bring these concerns to the attention to the CSK DCPO.
- b. Where the CSK DCPO considers that a child protection or welfare concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern criteria outlined below, then the CSK DCPO can refer to Tusla.
- c. Where the CSK DCPO remains uncertain he/she should contact Tusla for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.
- d. The CSK DCPO will ensure that the school/ parents/ guardians are informed that a report/ referral has been made to Tusla. The CSK DCPO will make an appointment with parents to inform them that the report has been made to Tusla unless to do so would be likely to endanger the child.
- e. After consultation with the Duty Social Worker the CSK DCPO will then take one of two options:
 - a. Report the allegation, concern or disclosure to the relevant authority (e.g. Tusla, An Garda Síochána, etc.) using the standard reporting form from Children First Guidance 2017 and in the case of out of hours or immediate danger contact An Garda Síochána.
 - b. In those cases where CSK DCPO decides not to report concerns to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the individual staff member or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why CSK is not taking such action. The employee or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to, the Tusla or An Garda Síochána.



The provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 apply once they communicate 'reasonably and in good faith' (see Paragraph 3.10.1 of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children).

- f. In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the Designated Liaison Person must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child/young person and that no child/young person is ever left in a situation that could place a child/young person in immediate danger.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or of risk to harm pending Tusla intervention. In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the relevant school DLP or Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí. This may be done through any Garda station.

3. In the event of CSK staff or trainer becoming aware of child welfare issues such as a child being impacted by bullying, the principal or teacher should be informed at the earliest opportunity. The staff member/trainer should also inform the DCPO.

4. At the point of any allegation or any concern, staff member, volunteer, trainer or others who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns about a child should make a contemporaneous written note of what is said or otherwise noted. The staff member might be required to assist in completing the Tusla Child Protection Welfare Report Form. This contemporaneous note is to be kept confidential and stored with the CSK DCPO in line with the Privacy Notice unless required for safeguarding purposes to be forwarded to Tusla or the Gardaí.

5. There may be instances where Garda need to be informed where a crime has been committed against a child. This could arise separately to the above duty to report to Tusla. where any such issue arises it must be brought to the CSK DCPO immediately.

Examples of reasonable grounds for concern are:

- Specific indication from the child that he/she was abused;
- An account by the person who saw the child being abused;
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way;
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent 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.

5. Confidentiality

- All data in relation to child protection records, (including those referenced in para 2.4 above), must be stored in a safe and confidential manner in a secure



locked cabinet. All information must be stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

- CSK commits to maintaining a policy of confidentiality in its work, especially in relation to children.
- We will keep a note of the allegation/concern and what action was taken. This record will be kept confidential (and this will be the ONLY place where the name of the child concerned will be used).
- We will never use real names of children in any public material, such as case studies or stories. The only exceptions are if a child has disclosed information of a sensitive nature that needs to be referred on to the appropriate authority (see paragraph 2)

6. Allegations against staff, colleagues:

- All staff members or team members are required to pass on any concerns that they have about a colleague.
- Concerns should be reported in line with procedures as set out in paragraph 5 'Disclosure'
- Any person reporting concerns must keep this confidential.
- Any breach of confidentiality will constitute misconduct.

Notes:

- Any breach of the child protection policy will be handled in accordance with CSK disciplinary procedures and in accordance with any advice or guidance received from the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána.
- Assurances of confidentiality cannot be made when a person is reporting concerns of harm. Records may be sought under Data Protection legislation or a Court could order the information to be disclosed.
- This policy will be reviewed and where appropriate, updated, at least **every two years** or after a material event.

Signature: _____

Name (print): _____

Date:



Appendix 1

Child Protection and Welfare Report Form

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.pdf

Contact Details for Tusla Local Duty Social Work Teams

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/>

Contact details for Local Garda Stations

<https://www.garda.ie/en/contact-us/station-directory>