



Child Protection & Welfare Policy

April 2024

South Dublin Arts Centre

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1. Introduction

Rua Red is operated by South Dublin Arts Centre Company Ltd, who manage the space and run an ambitious programme of arts events. Our annual events programme includes regular talks, film

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screenings, a varied selection of performances, exciting exhibitions in our galleries and a series of ongoing workshops and classes aimed at different age groups as well as plenty of drop-in activities and events throughout each week.

Along with partner organisations and residents, the centre also hosts a programme of outreach events aimed at all members of the community. It is our goal to provide a safe space and ensure that activities are conducted in an atmosphere free of interpersonal abuse, discrimination, harassment, or intolerance of the dignity of persons.

The safety, health and wellbeing of all participants are of the highest priority and our activities are intended to reflect these values. Accordingly, unfair, abusive, and objectionable behaviours are opposed to our founding ideals. Any improper behaviour especially towards the young or vulnerable is strictly prohibited. Should any due cause for complaint arise it should be reported in accordance with our Child Protection & Welfare Policy as set out in this manual.

2. Guiding Principles

This Policy privileges a child-centred approach where the developmental needs of the child/young person are to the fore. All arts organisations and individuals working with children have a responsibility to always protect children and act in accordance with government guidelines. A background to good practice, legislation, duties, and obligations relevant to child protection can be found in the government guidelines, *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. A copy of this can be accessed in Rua Red.

Having policies and procedures in place to minimise the risk of abuse or harm to children and young people, and for dealing with complaints and allegations, should serve to support board members, all staff and volunteers, and provide a clear framework to deal with any issues of child protection and safety.

There is an onus on everyone to report suspicions or concerns of abuse. It is important that those working with children/young people are trained and familiar with the definitions of abuse, equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and know how to take a concern or incident forward. Rua Red is committed to raising awareness of these issues among its board, all staff and volunteers, parents, and children/young people.

We are committed to fostering a welcoming environment at Rua Red, where it is understood to be a safe space for all. Any child or young person participating in an event or activity has the right to feel safe and supported. If a child or young person feels unhappy or unsafe while at Rua Red, they are encouraged to let a member of staff know so that the issue may be addressed appropriately.

These guidelines are not intended to generate an atmosphere of suspicion and fear but to acknowledge that abuse happens and that, as an organisation, Rua Red is playing its part in supporting its staff, volunteers, and community in identifying and supporting vulnerable and/or abused children.

3. Child Protection Policy Statement

Rua Red is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in all our cultural, recreational, and leisure services. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* through the establishment and implementation of procedures covering:

- Recruitment, training, and management/supervision of staff.
- Code of behaviour for staff.
- Incidents and accidents.
- Complaints.
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse.
- Confidentiality.
- Circulation of information to staff, parents/carers, and participants on what we do and what they should expect from us, including information on policies and procedures.
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff.

I have read and understand the Rua Red Child Protection Policy.

Please sign and return this page to the Child Protection Relevant Person/Designated Liaison Person.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

4. Recruiting and Selecting Staff

The recruitment and selection policy should be read in conjunction with the Rua Red Human Resources policy. In formulating policy Rua Red will take cognisance of equal opportunities legislation. Rua Red will take reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/young people. These procedures will be adopted whether staff are voluntary or paid, full or part-time. Anyone recruited by Rua Red to deliver activities in direct contact with children/young people will be subject to the following procedures.

We will ensure that our staff are carefully selected, trained, and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people.

All applicants whether for voluntary or paid, full or part-time positions will be recruited, in line with best practice, along the following lines:

- Candidates will be required to submit a CV.
- Candidates will be asked to sign a form declaring any previous criminal convictions.
- There will be a relevant probationary period of 3 months.
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda vetting.
- All staff will be required to complete Tusla's Children First E-Learning Programme and forward certificates to the Designated Liaison Person/Relevant Child Protection Officer.
- Staff should be selected by a panel of at least two representatives.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are available for every job (paid or otherwise).
- At least two written references which are recent, relevant, independent, and verbally confirmed will be necessary.
- No person deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed (ref. Childcare Act 1991). In this instance, a 'risk' may include:
 - any child-related or violent crime convictions.
 - refusal to sign a convictions disclosure declaration or consent to garda vetting.
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification or references.
 - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children.
- All employees will receive a copy of the Child Protection & Welfare Policy.
- A signed copy of the Child Protection Policy Statement will be kept in every employee's personnel file.

5. Creative Residents and Group Leaders

Rua Red provides space to community organisations, artists, and groups that organise activities within the venue. These individuals or organisations themselves must accept responsibility to ensure that those working for them are appropriately qualified, experienced, and suitable to work with children/young people. Third party event organisers working with children/young people are required to declare their child protection policy is in place prior to booking.

6. Management of Staff & Volunteers

Rua Red is committed to managing staff in a responsible manner. All new staff will receive an induction, training, and will be made aware of policies and procedures through the Rua Red Staff Handbook. All new staff sign and return the organisation's Child Protection Policy Statement and in doing so agree to abide by these policies and procedures.

Staff Management Statement

To protect staff (paid & voluntary) and children/young people, Rua Red ensures that all staff will:

- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, Designated Person and their role, and the child protection procedures.
- Read and sign the Child Protection Policy.
- Complete Tusla's Children First E-Learning Programme and forward certificate to the Designated Liaison/Relevant Child Protection Officer.

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- Be provided with an adequate level of supervision support and review of work practice.
- Consent to complete the Garda Vetting procedure as required.

7. Code of Behaviour for Staff

A code of behaviour for staff is an essential element of our organisation's Child Protection Policy. This code of behaviour has been drawn up for our staff and volunteers. The Rua Red code of behaviour can be summarised under the headings below. Under each heading Rua Red has set out guidance for staff and volunteers for working with children and young people.

Code of Behaviour Summary

1. Adopting a person-centred approach to working with children.
2. Promoting good practice in our work with children.
3. Not engaging in inappropriate behaviour with children.
4. Adhering to health and safety guidelines and procedures.
5. Applying our anti bullying policy.

Person-Centred Approach

All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse. To this end, all Rua Red staff and volunteers will:

- Treat all children and young people equally.
- Listen to and respect children and young people.
- Involve children and young people in decision-making.
- Provide an environment of encouragement, support, and praise.
- Use appropriate language—both physical and verbal.
- Offer constructive criticism when needed.
- Treat all people as individuals.
- Respect personal space.
- Lead by example.
- Create an atmosphere of trust.

Good Practice

- Undertake appropriate trainings eg. Children First E-Learning Programme, and other trainings as required.
- Make the Child Protection Policy and Procedures publicly available.
- Ensure procedures for accident/injuries or emergencies are in place, regularly reviewed, and adhered to.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow correct reporting procedures.
- Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns, or worries.
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour.
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis.
- Update/review policies and procedures regularly.
- Keep parents/carers informed of any issues that concern their children.

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- Ensure proper supervision including adequate ratios in respect to age, abilities and activities involved.
- Address all concerns with appropriate care and seriousness.

Inappropriate Behaviour

- Avoid situations where you are on your own with a child or young person. When this is not possible, you should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers or keyworkers.
- 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, or ridicule).
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- Don't hit or otherwise physically chastise children or young people.
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children or young people e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.
- Avoid horseplay or unnecessary physical contact.
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, try to address it in a sensitive manner and report the incident, regardless of the outcome, to the Designated Person.

Health and safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised.
- Carefully explain health and safety guidelines.
- Point out potential risks to Group Leader in advance and to all groups when they arrive for a programme or activity.
- Make clear all emergency exits.
- Notify Group Leaders of potential risks in the general area outside of the building.
- Provide a safe environment, be aware of accident procedures, and follow these accordingly.

8. Online Safety

Working online with children and young people does not change our organisation's approach to child protection and safeguarding. We will continue to adhere to our child protection guidelines and maintain our responsibilities of safeguarding young people within the online space.

We will ensure the safety of children and young people through the following procedures for operating online:

- Obtaining parental/guardian consent to communicate with young people under 18 years of age online.
- Clear information about use of online platforms (i.e., Zoom, Teams or other video conferencing tools), including the purpose for use, parameters, etc.
- Links to meetings will be sent as private messages and not posted on public forums. The risk of phishing will be reduced by never asking children or young people for login details, passwords, credit card information, or any other sensitive personal details.

- Participants shouldn't need to sign up for an account on a given platform to participate in an online programme. They should need only to follow a link and enter a password sent via email from a Rua Red account.
- To keep their identity secure, participants should log in with their first name and initial of their surname only.
- To reduce the risk of unwanted, disruptive intrusion to video conferencing sessions, Rua Red will use a registration system, password protection, waiting room, and closed session operating system.
- Operate a waiting room at the beginning of a session to control who can join a group call.
- Only the host of the meeting will be able to share their screen unless they grant permission for others to share their screen to show work or a presentation.
- We encourage parents/guardians to discuss online safety with their young person prior to participation in an online programme.
- Chats will be saved and stored. The 'private chat' feature will be disabled, and it will be made clear to all participants that any 'chat' features can be seen by the host and are recorded.
- Consent to record/ document/ distribute: Zoom allows the host to record an entire session (video, text, polls, whiteboards, chats—group and private). We will seek consent to use this feature and will remind participants at the beginning of a session that it is being recorded.
- Parents can help their young person get set up on their device, but they should not join the workshop.
- The facilitator(s) will wait for all participants to exit the meeting before leaving.

9. Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures

Rua Red will ensure that stakeholders are aware of the complaints procedure to enable them to make a complaint.

All complaints will be passed onto Senior Management. In the event of complaints relating to child protection, the complaint should be made to the Designated Child Protection Officer. In relation to non-child protection issues, Rua Red will make contact within 7 working days, either verbally or in writing to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and, if appropriate, inform the person of any action being taken in relation to the comments.

Recording Complaints and Reporting Procedures:

Any complaint, concern, or admission related to a child or young person will be recorded in an incident logbook, kept in the manager's office, and will always remain confidential. Access to the logbook will be restricted to the Designated Person and Deputy Designated Person.

When recording an incident, the following should be included:

- All details, date, time, and everyone involved—information should be factual.
- The nature of the disclosure or concern

Any information shared is to be treated with the utmost confidentiality. If there are any reasonable grounds for concern, the designated person will contact the duty social worker in the HSE for advice

and consultation. The duty social worker will determine whether there are reasonable grounds to proceed with the complaint and formally report the incident.

In case of emergencies outside of HSE working hours, the Garda may be contacted.

10. Reporting Procedures

What constitutes abuse?

Please see Appendix 2 for definitions of abuse.

What constitutes reasonable grounds for concern?

The following excerpt from Child First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2 – p38) shows what would 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/young person 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, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

What do I do if a child/young person makes a disclosure of abuse?

- 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 details unnecessarily.
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age appropriate).
- Record the disclosure accurately, keeping to the facts, as soon as possible after the disclosure but remain sensitive to the child's needs e.g., do not begin writing notes during a disclosure.
- Remain conscious of your physical and verbal language. E.g., a disclosure may prompt you to feel anger. Your own personal feelings should not be relayed to the child/young person.

I have a concern about a child/young person. What do I do?

Don't 'do nothing'. Child abuse is a difficult issue to address. And as a result, people may be reluctant to acknowledge its existence. The repercussions of reporting abuse are serious. Members of staff and the public may be afraid of being thought alarmist, interfering or malicious if they report suspected child abuse to the Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána. However, early intervention may reduce the risk of serious harm occurring to a child in the future. Concerns about the validity of a suspicion of abuse can be discussed with a Health Service Executive worker to assist in determining whether a suspicion should be formally reported.

Rua Red has appointed **Kimberly Griffith Walsh, Education and Engagement Officer, as the Child Protection Officer & Relevant/Designated Person** to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare within the organisation and to respond to any concerns that may be identified. Rua Red has appointed **Jordan Van Staden, Operations Manager, as the Deputy Child Protection Officer & Deputy Designated Person** to cover this role when the Child Protection Officer & Designated Person is unavailable or if he/she is directly involved in an incident, suspicion or accusation.

Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare.

Kimberly Griffith Walsh has been identified as the Relevant/Designated Person and first point of contact when reporting issues. If you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child or young person's safety and welfare please contact Kimberly Griffith Walsh, or another appointed staff member (see list below). 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 these procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer & Relevant/Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

To contact a Relevant/Designated Person by phone, contact Rua Red's main switchboard at **01 451 5860** and request:

Kimberly Griffith Walsh, Child Protection Officer & Relevant/Designated Person, or email kwalsh@ruared.ie

Jordan VanStaden, Deputy Child Protection Officer & Deputy Designated Person, or email jwilliams@ruared.ie

If neither the Designated Person nor Deputy can be contacted, you should contact **Joyce Dunne, Development Manager, at jdunne@ruared.ie** OR the local duty social worker. (See Appendix 3)

What happens if my suspicions are unfounded?

The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Health Service Executives or any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as individuals. This means that, if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, the plaintiff could only take a successful action against the organisation/person reporting the suspected abuse if they can prove that the organisation/person reporting the suspected abuse had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

How will my concerns be recorded?

Once you have contacted the Designated Person, they will take note of your concerns. These will be recorded in writing, as a report, in the incident book in the Child Protection Folder. The following will be recorded:

- Suspicions of abuse
- Concerns about the welfare of children/young people
- Worrying observations
- Behavioural changes
- Actions and outcomes

The report will record all details relating to your concerns including the date, time, people involved in the concern or disclosure, and any other factual information relating to the concern or disclosure. Any opinions should be supported by facts. The Child Protection Folder will be stored in a locked cabinet which only the Child Protection Officers have access to.

What happens once my concern is recorded?

Most people will not have experience dealing with child abuse. There is support available to the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person to make a judgement on whether to make an informal or formal report to the Health Service Executive. Where reasonable grounds for concern exist that a child is being abused, the Designated Person will contact the Duty Social Worker immediately for a consultation and to agree on the next course of action. If advised to do so the Designated Person will complete a Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns (Appendix 3). If no report is made, this should be recorded in the Child Protection Folder incident book and the reasons for desisting with the complaint made clear.

In the case of an emergency or if an issue arises outside HSE office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána. In all cases you will be informed by the Mandated Child Protection Officer of the outcome and actions taken as a result of your concerns, i.e. whether an informal or formal report was made to the HSE.

Who tells the child/young person's 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 most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. This person is most likely to be the Child Protection Officer & Designated Person.

Incidences of poor practice and allegations against employee

In the event of allegations being made against an employee (paid or voluntary), the protection of the child is the first priority and paramount consideration.

Where Rua Red becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by a volunteer or member of staff, the standard procedure for reporting allegations to the Health Service Executive will be followed. These are set out in the Reporting Procedures section of this document. Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith. When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the health board; this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern. Rua Red will ensure that any actions taken do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by An Garda Síochána or the Health Service Executive.

In the interest of natural justice, the volunteer/employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond to allegations made against him/her. The employer should note the response and pass on this information when making their informal and or formal report to the Health Service Executive. If an allegation of abuse is made against a volunteer or member of staff, Rua Red will take protective measures appropriate to the level of risk, while not unreasonably penalising the staff member – unless necessary to protect the child/young person. Protective measures may include increased supervision, assignment to different duties, or suspension. The decision to suspend an employee will be informed

by the organisation's agreed Child Protection & Welfare Policy (which all staff should have agreed to abide by in writing), the applicable employment contract (in the case of paid employees), and the rules of natural justice.

When dealing with an allegation against volunteers or staff, two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person the Child Protection Officer & Designated Person will deal with the issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made the Executive Director will deal with issues related to the staff member.

The priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk. If allegations are made against the Child Protection Officer & Designated Person, then the Deputy Child Protection Officer & Designated Person should be contacted. The reporting procedures outlined in the Reporting Procedures section of this document should be followed. Both primary carers and the 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 an 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 staff member should be taken in consultation with the Health Service Executive and Gardai.
- After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

11. Parental/carers involvement and sharing of information

Rua Red is committed to involving and sharing information with primary carers (parents, carers or responsible adults) in the case of any concern relating to a child or young person's welfare.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy.
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities undertaken by Rua Red with their children.
- 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 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 ongoing 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 volunteer or 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 personnel 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.
- Encourage primary carers to ensure that children are not left unaccompanied while in Rua Red.

12. Confidentiality statement

Our confidentiality statement gives clear guidance about issues of sharing information and maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

Rua Red is committed to ensuring peoples' right 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.
- Sharing such information with others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- We cannot guarantee total confidence 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 for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.



Appendix 1: Child Safeguarding Statement

Name of Service Provider:

Rua Red South Dublin Arts Centre, Blessington Rd, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 KV8N

Nature of Service and Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm:

We at Rua Red are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children who are participating in events and activities within our venue, in offsite locations and online. We privilege a child centred approach, where the developmental needs of the child/young person are to the fore. Our aim is to create a safe, creative, and enjoyable environment where children can engage in a range of creative activities and where their protection and welfare is paramount.

Rua Red agrees that:

- The protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations.
- Our guiding principles, policies, and procedures to safeguard children reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years.
- We will fully comply with our obligations under the Children First Act 2015.
- We will fully cooperate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child safeguarding matters.
- We are committed to upholding the rights of every child who participates in our services, including the right to be kept safe, protected from harm, listened to, and heard.
- Guiding principles apply to everyone in the organisation.
- Staff and volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation.

We at Rua Red believe that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We aim to ensure that, through all our interactions, the best interest of the child is paramount. As an organisation we are committed to the safeguarding of children through the following processes:

- Comprehensive recruitment and vetting processes for all staff and volunteers.
- Comprehensive training programmes which all staff are required to attend.
- Clearly defined and communicated Code and Standards of Behaviour.
- Safety management systems in place including, but not limited to, Rua Red's Child Safeguarding Policy, incident reporting and reviewing processes.

Risk Assessment

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We have carried out an assessment of any potential harm that may befall a child availing of our services. Taking the definition of 'harm' in relation to a child as: 'assault, ill treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or sexual abuse of the child.'

Below is a list of the possible areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1.	Access to Children	All Rua Red staff and volunteers are subject to a comprehensive screening process, which includes an application form, interview, reference check and Garda vetting.
2.	Risk of Harm	Per the Children First Act 2015, 'harm' means, in relation to a child: (a) Assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or (b) sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise. All Rua Red staff and volunteers are trained in child protection and are aware of their obligations in reporting a child protection complaint or concern.
3.	Use of Images of Children	Written permission sought in advance from parents and/or schools for use of children's images in publications and online.
4.	Off-Site Programmes	Rua Red will participate in programmes and events at external locations and/or with partner organisations with due regard to child safety.
5.	Recording and Sharing Information	All records pertaining to child safety complaints or concerns are held securely in a locked cabinet that only senior management has access to.
6.	Ratios	For Primary School workshops, the ratio should not be more than 30:3. For Secondary School workshops the ratio should not be more than 30:2.
7.	One-to-One Working	Rua Red programmes always involve more than one adult being present with children or at least within sight or hearing distance of others.
8.	Appropriate Physical Contact	There will be instances when physical touch is unavoidable and in fact necessary, e.g., avoiding injury. Physical touch should only occur when it is appropriate to the age, development of the child and in response to the particular needs of the child.
9.	Safe Use of Internet/Social Media	Mobile phones are not to be used during workshops unless they are a necessary part of the lesson plan. Comprehensive guidelines for the operation of online workshops are in place.

10.	External to the Venue	Staff and volunteers will not arrange external meetings or contact children outside the group or project or offer lifts to children.
11.	Responding to Challenging Behaviour	Staff and volunteers should not under any circumstances attempt to deal with any problems or challenging behaviour alone. If an activity, event, or interaction is becoming out of hand or becomes unsafe, the Group Leader/Keyworker/Staff members must be notified immediately.
12.	Communicating with Parents/Guardians and Primary Carers	Rua Red is committed to being open with all primary carers, i.e. parents and guardians. As a child-centred and person-centred organisation, Rua Red is committed to putting the interest of the child first. We encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. In case of emergency, contact information for primary carers will be collected prior to any event or activity.

Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015; Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017); and TUSLA Child Safeguarding a Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against Rua Red staff or volunteers toward a child availing of our services.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers who work with children.
- Procedures for provision of access to child safeguarding training and information, including how to identify the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to TUSLA.
- Procedure for maintaining the list of designated persons.
- Procedure for appointing relevant persons.

Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Rua Red is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our services.

This Child Safeguarding Statement is to be reviewed in January 2026 or as soon as is practicable following a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

Local TUSLA Contact:

Audrey Warren, Area Manager
Child and Family Agency
Dublin South West, Kildare, West Wicklow,
Suite 7 & 8,

Rua Red, South Dublin Arts Centre, Civic Square, Tallaght
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Vista Primary Care,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.

Tel: 045 839312
Email: am.dswkww@tusla.ie

In Case of Emergency, contact An Garda Síochána - 112/999

Signed

Maolíosa Boyle, Executive Director

Please contact Kimberly Griffith Walsh, Relevant/Designated Person under the Children First Act 2015, with any queries: kwalsh@ruared.ie

Appendix 2: 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 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 becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carers.” (Children First p.32)

Examples of emotional abuse in children include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming.
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carers.
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child.
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child.
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way.
- Under or over-protection of the child.
- 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. 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 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.
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child 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 in an act of masturbation.
- Sexual intercourse with a child whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- Sexual exploitation of a child... 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 person.

Circumstances where children may be more vulnerable to harm

In addition to the four main categories of abuse outlined above, Rua Red recognizes that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm. Tusla's [Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook 2](#) may be referenced for further details regarding this.

Appendix 3: Definitions of Bullying and Anti Bullying Policy

Bullying is defined as 'repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical, or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could be reasonably regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to a person's dignity, but as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying.'

Bullying behaviours can be physical and direct, such as slapping, intimidation and aggression, or more subtle and relational such as exclusion, talking negatively about a child to others, or the silent treatment.

How can you tell if your child is being bullied? Though some children are reluctant to tell, there are many indicators that your child might be being bullied or that s/he is coping with some other problem: unexplained cuts or bruises, sudden lack of confidence; anxiety about going to school; poor school performance; privacy about online communications.

Cyberbullying

The growth of social media, texting and online communication has provided new ways to harass others, and, given the public nature of these forums, they can be more devastating for children and teenagers.

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic and digital means to deliberately harass, ridicule or hurt another person or group of people. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying when technology such as social media platforms, text messages or email are used to deliberately hurt others.

Sometimes it can be difficult to identify who is perpetrating the bullying as the identity can be hidden or the person can use a fake identity. It can involve the following...

- Offensive comments on videos or message posts
- Publishing images that are designed to hurt or offend a person
- Identity theft or hacking into a young person's profile to impersonate them
- Online threats of harm or abuse

Cyberbullying signs or indicators can include changes in behaviour such as a reluctance to go online, getting nervous when receiving a text or display unusual mood after being online.

Anti Bullying Policy

Rua Red aims to provide a place where:

- Everyone can feel safe and secure.
- Bullying is not acceptable behaviour.
- Name calling is not tolerated.
- No one is victimized.

Fundamental to the concept of equality and respect is that this environment should be free from activities that are likely to adversely affect the dignity of the individual. Rua Red is a place where it is each person's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equally, and no one suffers abuse of any nature.

Sources/More information

- [Tusla, 'Name it and Tame it'](#)
- [National Youth Council of Ireland information and advice on cyberbullying](#)

Appendix 4: Reporting a Concern

Rua Red is in Dublin South West. To report a concern to a Social Worker responsible for this area, contact:

Building 2, Vista Primary Care Centre
Ballymore Road
Naas
Co Kildare.
W91 HT2X
Tel: 045 839300

Or for a social worker responsible for another area of Dublin or beyond, please check:

[Dublin Dedicated Contact Points](#)[Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

Submitting a concern using a form:

Rua Red, South Dublin Arts Centre, Civic Square, Tallaght
www.ruared.ie
Policy updated April 2024

The Child Protection and Welfare Report Form must be completed and submitted to Tusla for concerns about children under the age of 18. Please note these forms can be completed online using the [Tusla Portal](#). Please consider using this Portal rather than the paper forms below for increased efficiency and ease. You will also be able to print and track your report if submitted online. If you do want to complete the paper form, you can download it from:

[Publications and FormsTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

Appendix 5: References and Further Reading

- [Our Duty to Care - The principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people Department of Health and Children 2002](#)
- [Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children Department of Health 2017*](#)
- [Tusla, 'A Guide for the Reporting of child Protection and Welfare Concerns'*](#)
- [Code of Good Practice: Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector Department of Education and Science 2003](#)
- [Tusla, 'Tips for Your Child on the Internet'](#)

Legislation relating to child protection and welfare:

- [Children First Act 2015*](#)
- [Child Care Act 1991](#)
- [Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998](#)
- [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992](#)

* Hard copies of these documents are available from Rua Red on request.

Appendix 6: Standard Reporting Form

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

In case of emergency or outside Health Service Executive office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Principal Social Worker or Duty Social Worker : _____

1. Details of Child

Name	Male ☐	Female ☐
Address		
Age/D.O.B	School	

1a. Details of Parents

Name of Mother:	Name of Father:
Address of Mother if different to Child:	Address of Father if different to Child:
Telephone Number:	Telephone Number:

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

--

1c. Household Composition

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g school/occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

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3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name	Age	Male ☐	Female ☐
Address			
Relationship to child		Occupation	

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers	School
Public Health Nurse	Gardai
G.P	Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club:
Hospital	
Other, specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs:	

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

YES ☐ NO ☐ If YES, what is their attitude? _____

6. Details of Person reporting concerns (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of Confidentiality)

Name	Occupation
Address	
Telephone Number	
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:	

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name	Date
Occupation	Signed