



# **CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE**

## **POLICY & PROCEDURES**

June 2026

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### **Section 1 - Child<sup>1</sup> Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures: Declaration of Guiding Principles**

Music Network's Learning and Participation Programme provides bespoke music educational activities for children, young people and adults throughout Ireland, in partnership with local organisations and educators.

Music Network believes that the best interests of children and young people participating in all of its events are paramount. We undertake to adopt an inclusive and child-centred approach to all of our activities involving children and young people, regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, whereby we protect and promote their rights, including the right to be protected, treated with respect and listened to. These guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation.

Music Network undertakes to implement policy and procedures in relation to:

- Key Roles & Responsibilities
- Code of Behaviour for all staff
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse<sup>2</sup>
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selecting staff
- Involvement of primary carers<sup>3</sup>
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse against staff
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

This document has been compiled with reference to the relevant legislation (Children First Act 2015, National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012) as well as *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017) and related support documents, as provided by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

This policy and procedures document is available via [musicnetwork.ie](http://musicnetwork.ie) to all Music Network staff<sup>4</sup> and board members as well as children and primary carers participating in Music Network activities.

This policy will be reviewed on a 24-month basis, or sooner if necessary, due to changes in legislation or national policy. The next review will take place in June 2028.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Pat Moylan'.

Date:

A handwritten date in blue ink that reads '12<sup>th</sup> June 2026'.

Pat Moylan (Chair) on behalf of the Board of Music Network

<sup>1</sup> The Child Care Act 1991 defines a child as a 'person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married' (S.2.1). Since January 2019 it is no longer legal to marry in Ireland under the age of 18. In child protection cases concerning people under the age of 18 who have married in other countries, it is advisable to check with Tusla whether individuals in question are defined as children.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for definitions of abuse.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'primary carers' refers to parents, guardians and responsible adults with primary responsibility for a child.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'staff' includes staff (permanent, temporary and casual), facilitators, artists, promoters, volunteers, interns etc.) working with children during Music Network projects. Throughout this document specific responsibilities are assigned to various staff members according to suitability.

### Key Roles & Responsibilities:

The key individuals responsible for implementation review and reporting in relation to the Music Network Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be the Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (see names and contact details below).

The Role of the **Designated Liaison Person** is to:

- Be the primary person to make contact with if staff members have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's safety or welfare;
- Provide feedback to the staff member, as appropriate;
- Keep the company list of Mandated Persons up to date by consulting the Schedule of Mandated Persons (Children First Act 2015, Schedule 2), and ensure new employees are informed if they are mandated;
- Keep up to date regarding Child Protection issues and ensure relevant documentation and policies are kept up to date;
- Ensure that suitable and up to date training is available to staff as appropriate to their role;
- Support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection;
- Manage confidential records;
- Support the Deputy Designated Liaison Person;
- Ensure that procedures are implemented;
- Be available to primary carers to discuss the content and implementation of these policies and guidelines;
- When working with a partner organisation, liaise with the partner Designated Liaison Person in advance of the event to agree a procedure for reporting child abuse;
- Where reasonable grounds for concern exist, make a formal referral to Tusla using the Tusla Web Portal or Child Protection and Welfare Report Form. The Tusla Web Portal is now Tusla's preferred pathway for receiving child protection or welfare concerns and retrospective abuse reports.<sup>5</sup>
- Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless:<sup>6</sup>
  - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child or young person;
  - Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
  - The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, as appropriate;

### Designated Liaison Person:

Claire Austen (Programmes Co-ordinator)

Contact Details: Music Network, National Concert Hall Building, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 475 0224 / [programmesadmin@musicnetwork.ie](mailto:programmesadmin@musicnetwork.ie)

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<sup>5</sup> See Section 3 of this document for reporting procedures and Appendix E for links to the Tusla web portal and report forms.

<sup>6</sup> For guidance on talking to parents/guardians about child protection or welfare concerns, see Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* (2nd Edition), 2024, pp. 34–5.

The Role of the **Deputy Designated Liaison Person** is to:

- Act in the role of the Designated Liaison Person when the Designated Liaison Person is unavailable;
- Support the Designated Liaison Person.

**Deputy Designated Liaison Person:**

Ciarán Kilbride (Operations Administrator)

Contact Details: Music Network, National Concert Hall Building, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

Tel: 014750224 / [operations@musicnetwork.ie](mailto:operations@musicnetwork.ie)

### **Section 2 - Code of Behaviour**

The Code of Behaviour lists the type of behaviours and responsibilities that Music Network staff will adhere to when working with children. The Code concerns all staff members and the administrative responsibilities of Music Network.

The Music Network Code of Behaviour for staff members is presented under the following categories:

- Child-centred approach
- Good practice
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Physical contact
- Health & Safety
- Photography/Videography

#### **Child-centred approach**

*Artist/Facilitator:*

- Discuss boundaries of behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and their primary carers;
- Encourage feedback from the group;
- Treat all children equally and as individuals;
- Listen to and respect children;
- Respect a child's personal space;
- Involve children in decision-making, where appropriate;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed but provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use age-appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Have fun and encourage a positive, trusting atmosphere;
- Lead by example;
- Ensure activities are fully accessible for all participants, regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race,
- membership of the Traveller community or socio-economic status.

### Good Practice

#### *Artist/Facilitator:*

- Plan your session and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically. Think about how you communicate with children;
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Be inclusive of all children with special needs;
- Encourage children to report any bullying, concerns or worries;
- Do not take a session on your own. If this is not possible, then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers and Music Network;
- Do not spend time alone with children. In an unavoidable situation where you find yourself alone with a child, please contact the primary carer or Music Network;
- Do not transport children to or from a session in your car;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said might have caused upset or offence, then try to address it in a sensitive manner;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Report and record any incidents, accidents or concerns in accordance with the Reporting Procedures;
- Any contact with young people via phone, text, email must be done with parental consent;
- Do not let allegations made by a child go unrecorded;
- Do not make or receive private calls/texts while facilitating/supervising an activity;
- Do not engage with young people through social media platforms.

#### *Promoters:*

- Exercise good communication with the primary carer.

#### *Music Network core staff:*

- Communicate fully with the artists, facilitators, promoters, key workers etc. engaged in Music Network's programmes;
- Provide appropriate training for staff;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly.

#### *Music Network core staff & Artist/Facilitator:*

- In the case of a workshop hosted directly by Music Network, create and maintain a register containing the following details for each child: name, address, phone number, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact and any other necessary information (e.g. dietary requirements, allergies etc.);
- In the case of a workshop hosted directly by Music Network, designate 2 supervisors per children's changing area, as applicable;
- In the case of a workshop hosted directly by Music Network, make primary carers, children, visitors, teachers/group leaders and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policies & Guidelines;
- In the case of a workshop hosted directly by Music Network, keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Have Emergency Procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;

- Ensure appropriate supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved;
- If an employee/facilitator reports a workplace concern in good faith and on reasonable grounds in accordance with the procedures outlined in the legislation, it will be treated as a 'protected disclosure' under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014;
- Report concerns about other workers' behaviour.

### Inappropriate behaviour

- Do not use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language;
- Do not single out a particular child for favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unnecessary focus or attention;
- Do not allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Do not hit or physically chastise children;
- Do not socialise inappropriately with children, i.e. outside of structured organisational activities;
- Do not enter a children's changing area unless authorised.

### Physical Contact

- Always seek the child's consent in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Do not engage in physical horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children about their level of comfort when engaged in touch exercises;
- Do not do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

### Health and Safety

#### *Promoter/Artist/Facilitator:*

- Provide a safe environment;
- Never leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Follow all incident, accident and other reporting procedures.

### Photography/Videography

- Music Network adheres to the Arts Council's *Guidelines for taking and using images of children and young people in the arts sector*;
- Music Network is also committed to advocating that its Partner Promoters follow this code of practice where appropriate;
- Where images/recordings are undertaken by Music Network, this will be done on the basis of 'Informed Consent';
- See Section 4 for further details on consent for taking and using images.

## **Section 2.1 - Code of Behaviour for Staff and Children Participating in Online Events**

- Where participants are aged under 18, Music Network or the partner organisation will seek written parental permission for participation in online events; <sup>7</sup>
- Children and staff should dress appropriately, as for an in-person event;

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix D for sample consent form.

- The partner organisation and/or Music Network must ensure appropriate online supervision based on adequate ratios;
- Staff should never find themselves alone with a child in an online meeting;
- Children and staff must be located in safe and suitable working environments. A bedroom or bathroom is not a suitable environment;
- Children should have a primary carer in the room with them, or in a nearby room and within hearing distance. Host(s) should ideally be in a room where other people cannot see or listen to the event. If this is not possible, headphones must be worn and screens angled appropriately;
- Where possible, children should use a parent's device rather than their own device to participate in the event;
- Meetings must be password protected and only accessible by invitees;
- No harmful or inappropriate material must be shared online by students or staff;
- In the unlikely event that a meeting is hacked by an outsider, the host will immediately end the meeting and the event will be rescheduled;
- Any security breaches relating to an online event will be reported by Music Network internally and externally, as appropriate;
- Communication outside of the agreed event time must be through the primary carer or partner organisation, including the sending of links to events. Under no circumstances should staff communicate directly with children outside of the event time;
- Children will not be required to set up accounts to participate in any online event;
- Online meetings should not usually be recorded. Parental permission will be sought for any recordings;<sup>8</sup>
- In the spirit of openness and group transparency, private chat between participants during the event is discouraged;
- Recording and reporting procedures for staff and children are as outlined in Section 3 of Music Network's Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures;
- Materials presented or shared by facilitators in learning contexts should not be shared on any social media platform or elsewhere without the consent of the facilitator.

### **Section 3 - Recording & Reporting Procedures**

In order that staff may appropriately express, record and report concerns about children, it is imperative that the following recording and reporting procedures are followed closely.

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<sup>8</sup> See Section 4.

### Recording procedures

In the circumstances where staff members feel that there are reasonable grounds for concern<sup>9</sup>, the following recording procedures should be followed carefully. Staff should record the following information in relation to children:

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

Written records of this nature should be submitted to the Designated Liaison Person, who will scan and store them digitally in a secure folder which is accessible only to the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person. These records are not to be viewed by anyone not directly connected with the report, and will be kept for an appropriate period of time, in line with Music Network's Privacy Statement. Child protection and welfare records will be updated as required and reviewed regularly by the Designated Liaison Person.

### Dealing with a disclosure

- Stay calm and listen to the child, allowing the child enough time to say what they need to say;
- Accept what the child says;
- Do not use leading questions or prompt details. If clarification is required, try to use language that is similar to that used by the child;
- Conceal any visible emotional response;
- Reassure the child but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Do not make the child repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- Explain to the child what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate);
- Remain supportive to the child.

### Reporting procedures

Reports of abuse or suspected abuse will be made to the relevant authorities. In the event of a concern or disclosure of abuse, staff should follow these reporting procedures:<sup>10</sup>

- In the event of a disclosure:
  - Record all details, including date, time, and people involved in the disclosure and the facts. Information recorded should be factual;
  - Try to use exact quotations from the child's testimony and do not use your own language in the record;
  - If necessary, draw a discrete diagram to illustrate any injuries that may have been reported in the course of the disclosure.
- Inform the Designated Liaison Person (or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person, if unavailable) and complete the DLP Contact Form (available from the Designated Liaison Person);

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix B for definition of reasonable grounds for concern.

<sup>10</sup> Please note, under the Children First Act 2015, certain classes of professionals are designated as mandated persons and must follow a separate reporting procedure. See Appendix C.

- If neither the Designated Liaison Person nor Deputy Designated Liaison Person are available, contact the local Duty Social Worker in Tusla directly; contact details for all counties are listed at <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/>
- The Designated Liaison Person may contact the Tusla Duty Social Worker for an informal consultation prior to making a report. Any concern should then be reported to Tusla without delay;
- Any concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be reported to Tusla;
- Where the person allegedly causing harm to a child is another child (peer abuse), reports should be made to Tusla for both children;
- Failure to report and failure to take steps with regard to child protection and abuse is in breach of the “Reckless Endangerment of Children” Section 176, Criminal Justice Act, 2006;
- Withholding information relating to the commission of a serious offence, including a sexual offence, against a person who is under the age of 18 years or an otherwise vulnerable person is a criminal offence under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, Sections 2 and 3;
- In the case where the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report concerns to Tusla, the individual employee, facilitator or volunteer who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation is not taking such action, and has every right to report their concern directly to Tusla;
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 makes provisions for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse ‘reasonably and in good faith’ to designated officers of Tusla or to any member of An Garda Síochána;
- If, following consideration, a certain concern does not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern, the Designated Liaison Person will maintain a record of the concern since it may, upon review, reveal patterns which may heighten the level of concern.
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern, the Designated Liaison Person will contact the Duty Social Worker using the Tusla Web Portal or the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form available from Tusla<sup>11</sup>. (Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally, initially, and then followed by the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form. Reports should be made to Tusla without delay);
- The Designated Liaison Person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to Tusla unless it is likely to put the child at further risk or pose a risk to the safety of staff members;
- Information will be shared on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis and in the best interests of the child;
- In case of emergencies outside of Tusla’s service hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí;<sup>12</sup>
- If concerns about a child are reported anonymously, they will be followed up fully in accordance with Tusla standard procedures. If the report has been made through a

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix E for links to the Tusla web portal and report forms.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix F for contacting An Garda Síochána.

- third party, the person mediating should be requested to facilitate contact between the original person who reported the concern and Tusla;
- The reporting procedures will be known and accessible to all staff. When a report has been made to the Designated Liaison Person, all actions and outcomes should be noted;
- Staff members reporting abuse are entitled to request written acknowledgement from the body with whom the complaint has been lodged (e.g. Designated Liaison Person or Duty Social Worker). Likewise, the Designated Liaison Person is entitled to request written acknowledgement from the Duty Social Worker or the Gardaí acknowledging receipt of the report;
- If there is concern that a child is missing, contact the Designated Liaison Person without delay.

### Retrospective Disclosure

(In the case of an adult disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood)

- If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser identified by an adult making a retrospective disclosure, a report of the allegation should be made to Tusla without delay, using the Tusla Web Portal or Retrospective Abuse Report Form;<sup>13</sup>
- The HSE offer two counselling services for adults who have experienced abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood:
  - The National Counselling Service is in place to listen to, value and understand those who have been abused in childhood. The service is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service and is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm free of charge in all regions of the country. The service can be accessed either through healthcare professionals or by way of self-referral ( for contact details of local branches see <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-counselling-service/> );
  - Connect Counselling provide a telephone counselling and support service for any adult who has experienced abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood (Freephone 1800 477 477, 7 evenings a week, 6pm–10pm).

### Section 4 - Statement of Confidentiality

Music Network respects the right of any individual to absolute confidentiality. However, Music Network will prioritise its commitment to the safety and welfare of children in the event that an abuse or a concern of abuse that is reported through the appropriate channels. In this instance, the following will apply:

- Supplying appropriate information to other necessary parties for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection;
- Where the best interests of a child are at risk, Music Network cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality;

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix D for the Portal weblink and sample report form.

- Primary carers and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to Tusla unless doing so would put the child at further risk;
- Images of a child will not be published without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used by other parties during public performances);<sup>14</sup>
- Primary carers will be informed of any recording that Music Network undertakes during workshops or events;
- Procedures have been put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our privacy policy;
- A policy of co-operating with Tusla in the sharing of our records where a child welfare or protection issue arises;
- We are committed to attending and sharing information, as required, at formal child protection and welfare meetings as organised by Tusla i.e. child protection conferences and strategy meetings.

### **Section 5 - Procedures for Recruiting and Selecting Staff<sup>15</sup>**

Music Network recognises the importance of selecting appropriate staff to work with children. Music Network will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary);
- Posts will be advertised for prospective positions as widely as possible;
- Applicants will be provided with information about Music Network and its activities;
- Candidates will be required to complete a written application;
- Candidates will be required to provide contact details for at least two recent, relevant, independent referees;
- Staff will be selected through a process involving a panel of at least two representatives;
- Music Network will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Music Network will not employ someone deemed to be a risk to the safety and welfare of children. Some of the exclusions include:
  - Any child-related convictions;
  - Insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
  - Concealing information regarding suitability to work with children.
- Every employee will undergo a probationary period of six months;
- Identification will be made available which includes the name and address together with a signature or photograph. All staff working with children as a necessary and regular part of their role will undergo Garda Vetting as part of the recruitment process. For once-off activities, where there is minimal potential for a relationship of trust to be established between the participants and facilitator, the local co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring a suitable adult supervisor is present with the facilitator and participant group at all times during the Learning and Participation activity. Garda Vetting of the facilitator will not be carried out in this instance.

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<sup>14</sup> See Appendix F for sample photography/videography consent form.

<sup>15</sup> See Footnote 4 above for definition of 'staff'.

### **Section 6 - Managing and Supervising Staff**

Music Network recognises that responsible management and supervision of staff working directly with children will lead to the effective execution of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures. Music Network undertakes to ensure that:

#### **New staff will**

- Have child protection training made available to them as appropriate to their role;
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of behaviour, child protection procedures, and the identity and roles of the Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person;
- Undergo a probationary period of six months.

#### **All staff will**

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
- Read the Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy and Procedures documents as appropriate to their roles;
- Staff working directly with children (or vulnerable adults) will complete the Declaration Form<sup>16</sup>.

### **Section 7 - Involvement of primary carers and children**

Music Network respects the role of primary carers and the rights of children, and to this end, it is important that we involve primary carers and children in the implementation of these policies and procedures. In order to fulfil that objective, in the case of a workshop hosted directly by Music Network we will:

- Share the below information with the participant group co-ordinator so that information can in turn be shared with primary carers and children:
  - The availability of our Child Protection Policy and Procedures;
  - Details of all activities and potential activities;
  - The contact details of the Designated Liaison Person and details of the complaints procedure;
- Request that the participant group's Communications Strategy and Anti-Bullying Policy are on display;
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of primary carers, where appropriate, through the participant group co-ordinator;
- Involve children in decision-making, where appropriate;
- Ensure children understand that they can talk to any member of staff if they are worried about something.

If Music Network staff experience concerns about the welfare of the child, the staff will:

- Respond to the needs of the child;
- Keep primary carers fully informed of all procedures and necessary information, unless to do so would place the child at further risk;

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix H.

- Follow the recording and reporting procedures outlined in this document;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, immediately ensure the safety of the child;

Music Network is committed to putting the interests of the child first. To that end, the staff will:

- 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's welfare.

### **Section 8 - Allegations of Misconduct or Abuse by Staff members**

In the event that allegations are made against a Music Network staff member, the protection of the child will be the paramount consideration. Two separate procedures will be followed: one in respect of the child and one in respect of the staff member against whom the allegation has been made. Two separate key authorities will deal with each separate procedure. Music Network will take protective measures appropriate to the level of risk while not unreasonably penalising the worker – unless necessary to protect the child. Protective measures might include:

- Increased supervision
- Assignment to different duties
- Suspension.

In respect of the child:

- Designated Liaison Person will deal with issues relating to the child;
- If allegations are made against the Designated Liaison Person, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person should be contacted and vice versa;
- The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk;
- The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of this document should be followed.
- The organisation will cooperate with Tusla on the proportionate sharing of records where a child welfare or protection issue arises.

In respect of the staff member:

- Our Chief Executive Officer will deal with issues relating to the staff member.
- If allegations are made against the Chief Executive Officer, the Chairperson of the organisation should be contacted;
- The Chairperson of the organisation should be contacted as soon as possible;
- If the allegation is of a serious nature, Tusla and/or the Gardaí should be contacted before the staff member is informed of the allegation;

- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation;
- The staff member will be given the opportunity to respond;
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Tusla and the Gardaí;
- After consultation, the Chief Executive Officer, or in the event that the Chief Executive Officer is accused, the Chairperson should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

### **Section 9 - Complaints and Comments**

If primary carers or other key stakeholders wish to make a complaint or comment about some aspect of a Music Network project involving children, such complaints, comments or feedback will be:

- The responsibility of the Designated Liaison Person;
- Responded to within 2 weeks.

Both verbal and written complaints will be recorded and responded to appropriately.

Parents and other stakeholders may contact the Designated Liaison Person directly using the details provided on p. 5 of this document.

Parents and other stakeholders may appeal a decision relating to a complaint by directing a written or verbal appeal to the Designated Liaison Person, who will confer with the appropriate members of staff. Responses to appeals will be provided within 2 weeks.

### **Section 10 – Anti-Bullying**

Any form of bullying in a Music Network coordinated activity is prohibited. For definitions of bullying, training available to staff and details of how the organisation will respond to bullying, see Music Network's Safety Statement, available on [musicnetwork.ie](http://musicnetwork.ie)

### **Section 11 - Incidents and Accidents**

In situations where Music Network is operating projects without the assistance of a host partner organisation, all incidents and accidents that occur should be recorded in the 'Accident Book'. The material recorded in the 'Accident Book' may be sensitive and will be kept in a locked compartment by the Designated Liaison Person. The book will be available to staff members to add entries and must be returned to the Designated Liaison Person.

In order to effectively manage instances of incidents and accidents, Music Network must:

- Maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children involved directly with the organisation;
- Cross-reference children's contact details between the accident book and file;
- Where necessary, ensure that external organisations with whom we have dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;
- Have first-aid boxes available and regularly stocked;

## **Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures**

- Have the location of the first-aid box(es) known to staff;
- Advise children of the risks of dangerous material;
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk.

### Appendix A

#### Definitions of Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse outlined in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. They are:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

It is also recognised that bullying (including cyberbullying), whether verbal, psychological or physical, can be the cause of genuine concerns about a child's welfare.

The following is a synopsis of the information contained in the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017*.

#### Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties.

Examples of neglect in children include:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision;
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding;
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation;
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation;
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture;
- Lack of adequate clothing;
- Inattention to basic hygiene;
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age;
- Persistent failure to attend school;
- Abandonment or desertion.

#### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse usually relates to the relationship between a carer and a child rather than a specific incident or incidents. Emotional abuse can manifest in the child's behaviour or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Examples of emotional abuse in children include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- Emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer;
- Inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- Under or over protection of the child;
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline;
- Exposure to domestic violence;
- Exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Examples of physical abuse include:

- Severe physical punishment;
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- Pushing, shaking or throwing;
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- Terrorising with threats;
- Observing violence;
- Use of excessive force in handling;
- Deliberate poisoning;
- Suffocation;
- Fabricated/induced illness;
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child;
- Female genital mutilation.

### 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. This may include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse,

or inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography;

- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology;
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person.

### Appendix B

#### **Recognising child neglect or abuse**

Child neglect or abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. A list of indicators of child abuse is contained in Appendix A. No one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse. It may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined by the relevant professionals in the context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

#### Guidelines for recognition

The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child neglect or abuse:

- (i) considering the possibility;
- (ii) looking out for signs of neglect or abuse;
- (iii) recording of information.

Staff members should also keep in mind children with additional vulnerabilities. Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others, including:

- Children in residential settings;
- Children in the care of the State e.g. in foster care, relative care;
- Children whose carers suffer from mental health issues, addiction or substance abuse;
- Children of adolescent parents;
- Children who have suffered previous abuse;
- Children who are homeless;
- Children who are carers;
- Children with disabilities or communication difficulties;
- Children with mental health issues;
- Children for whom gender or sexuality is a factor;
- Children who are subject to bullying and/or internet and social media-related concerns;
- Separated children seeking asylum;
- Children being trafficked;
- Children of cultures, ethnicities or religious faiths where community norms may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction.

#### Reasonable grounds for concern

- An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse;
- Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect;
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse;
- Admission or indication by someone of an alleged abuse;
- A specific indication from a child that he or she was abused;
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused;

- Evidence (e.g. injury or behaviour) that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to have been caused in any other way;
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.

*See pages 7-12, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 for further details regarding the signs and symptoms of child abuse.*

**Remember you must report - you should not investigate.**

### Appendix C

#### **Mandated Persons**

Under the Children First Act 2015, certain classes of professionals are designated as mandated persons. The full list can be found in Schedule 2 of the Act (see link below)

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for maintaining a list of mandated persons and will inform staff members if they are mandated persons and share with them the relevant reporting procedure.

## **Appendix D**

## **Music Network Parental Consent Form (Online Event)**

### **EVENT DETAILS**

- a. Facilitator/Ensemble name
- b. Event Date
- c. Type of Activity
- d. Event start time

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of child at time of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

- I have read and understood Section 2.1: Code of Behaviour for Online Events in Music Network's Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures.
- I consent to my child (for whom I have parental responsibility) participating in the above event in my home or at other locations as may be agreed in writing.
- I understand that the facilitator will operate in accordance with Music Network's Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures, and is required to report any child welfare concerns to Music Network's Designated Liaison Person.
- I understand that concerns of a serious nature, as outlined in Music Network's Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures, will be reported to An Garda Síochána or Tusla Child and Family Agency.
- I understand that interactive events should be accessed on my device if possible rather than on personal devices that are held by a child or young person independently.
- I understand that the material presented and shared is designed for educational purposes in a protected learning environment and that materials presented or shared in learning context should not be shared by participants without the consent of the facilitator.
- I understand that a parent or guardian needs to be present to supervise interactive events.

All information provided is confidential, in line with our privacy policy, which is available to read at [musicnetwork.ie/privacy](http://musicnetwork.ie/privacy)

Parent's/guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**

**Reporting Child Abuse**

Tusla Duty Social Work Contact List by County

An up-to-date list of contacts can be found here:

<http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/>

**OUT OF HOURS ANY QUERY OR CONCERN RELATING TO CHILDREN SHOULD BE REPORTED TO AN GARDA SIOCHANA (see Appendix F)**

Link to Tusla Web Portal

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/>

Child Protection and Welfare Report Forms and Guidance Notes

All Tusla guidance notes and report forms are available at <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

### **Appendix F**

#### **Contacting An Garda Síochána**

An Garda Síochána can be contacted by the following means:

##### **EMERGENCY BY TELEPHONE**

###### **Emergency 999/112**

In an emergency always dial 999/112. You should use this service if a crime or incident is happening now or if anyone is in immediate danger. 999/112 calls have the highest priority and your call will be handled by trained Call-takers. An Garda Síochána aim to answer 80% of 999 calls within 7 seconds and deploy resources immediately giving an estimated time of arrival. An Garda Síochána will take appropriate steps to deal with all incidents and ensure that emergency and life threatening calls receive priority. An Garda Síochána will endeavour to get to you within 15 minutes in urban locations and as soon as possible, given the distance to be travelled, in more rural areas.

###### **Emergency SMS 112**

The 112 SMS service lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the Republic of Ireland send an SMS text message\* to the Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS) where it will be passed to An Garda Síochána, the Ambulance service, the Fire service, or the Irish Coastguard. The ECAS operator will act as a relay between the texter and the required emergency service. Before you can use the 112 SMS service, you will need to register your mobile phone on <https://www.112.ie/> website.

**Remember that this is an Emergency Service and should only be used in an emergency, i.e. life is at risk, crime or incident is happening now, anyone is in immediate danger.**

\*An SMS text message is a non real-time service and therefore there is no guarantee that your SMS will be delivered.

##### **NON-EMERGENCY**

For non-emergency or general enquiries, contact your nearest and/or local Garda Station. Telephone numbers for all Garda stations and key offices are available here: <https://www.garda.ie/en/Contact-Us/Station-Directory/> and they are also published in the Eircom Telephone directory.

###### **Confidential Line 1800 666111**

The Garda Confidential line allows people to call with information relating to matters of crime or other activities.

Email addresses for key offices/sections are listed here:

<https://www.garda.ie/en/Contact-Us/Useful-contact-numbers/>

**Please do not email An Garda Síochána about a crime or incident in progress as emails are not monitored on a 24 hour basis. In the event of an emergency dial 999 or 112.**

## **Appendix G**

### **Image and audio release form**

**This form applies to (please tick):**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Myself and/or my children/guardians |  |
| My group/class/organisation         |  |

I grant Music Network and their project partners, representatives and employees the right to take audio recordings, photographs and film of the person named herein at any activity related to the project or activity named below.

I consent to Music Network retaining these photographs/recordings and for these images to be used by Music Network and their project partners/relevant third parties in all future publicity, education events and archiving, including print and online media, publications, brochures, advertising and other publicity material.

Music Network agrees that these images will only be used for these purposes. The recording of these images/audio will be supervised by Music Network.

**I confirm that I am authorised to give permission on behalf of the person/persons named herein.**

**I have read and understand the above:**

|                                              |  |
|----------------------------------------------|--|
| Signature:                                   |  |
| Name:                                        |  |
| Name of school/class,<br>organisation/group: |  |

|                                                |  |
|------------------------------------------------|--|
| Your role (parent, teacher, group leader etc): |  |
| Address:                                       |  |
| Date:                                          |  |

If you are completing this form on behalf of your children/guardians or a group, please complete section 2 below.

## Section 2

Please complete the section below for every child/guardian or person in your group/class:

| First name | Surname | Has consented<br>(tick box) | Has <u>not</u> consented<br>(tick box) |
|------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|
|            |         |                             |                                        |
|            |         |                             |                                        |
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All information provided is confidential, in line with our privacy policy, which is available to read at [musicnetwork.ie/privacy](http://musicnetwork.ie/privacy)

If you have any questions at all, just ask a member of our team or email us at [pr@musicnetwork.ie](mailto:pr@musicnetwork.ie)

**For internal use:**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Project/event: |  |
| Date:          |  |

**Appendix H**

Declaration Form for all employees, students, contracted artists and all other personnel working for **Music Network** with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Learning and Participation (Outreach) work with **Music Network** can involve access to children and vulnerable adults, and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children vulnerable adults, we require all employees, volunteers, contracted artists and other personnel working with children and vulnerable adults to fill out this declaration form.

**Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Forename:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any name previously known as** \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order? Yes [    ] No [    ]**

**If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):**

**Nature of offence**

**Date of offence**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ state that there is no reason why I would be unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

I confirm that I have read the Music Network Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures and/or Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy, and will abide by the codes of behaviour contained therein.

I hereby authorise **Music Network** to carry out a Garda Vetting check on my name and will fill in any forms required for this task when they are available.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix I

#### Further reading/reference

- Children First: Child Safeguarding Resource List (Tusla, 2025)  
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child\\_Safeguarding\\_Resource\\_List.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Safeguarding_Resource_List.pdf)
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Tusla, 2017)  
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children\\_First\\_National\\_Guidance\\_2017.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf)
- Children First: Dealing with Adult Retrospective Disclosures of Childhood Abuse Addendum (Tusla, 2025)  
[https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Dealing\\_with\\_Adult\\_Retrospective\\_Disclosures\\_of\\_Childhood\\_Abuse\\_Addendum\\_Eng.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Dealing_with_Adult_Retrospective_Disclosures_of_Childhood_Abuse_Addendum_Eng.pdf)
- Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement (Tusla, 2017)  
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4214-TUSLA\\_Guidance\\_on\\_Developing\\_a\\_CSS\\_LR.PDF](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4214-TUSLA_Guidance_on_Developing_a_CSS_LR.PDF)
- A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns (Tusla, 2024)  
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4214-TUSLA\\_Guide\\_to\\_Reporters\\_Guide\\_A4\\_v3.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4214-TUSLA_Guide_to_Reporters_Guide_A4_v3.pdf)
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Tusla, 2024)  
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla\\_-\\_Child\\_Safeguarding\\_-\\_A\\_Guide\\_for\\_Policy\\_Procedure\\_and\\_Practice.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_-_Child_Safeguarding_-_A_Guide_for_Policy_Procedure_and_Practice.pdf)
- Guidelines for taking and using images of children and young people in the arts sector (The Arts Council, 2009)  
<http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Guidelines.pdf>
- Guidance on Garda Vetting for the Youth Work Sector (NYCI, 2016)  
<https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NYCI-Garda-Vetting-Guide.pdf>

#### Legislation relating to child protection and welfare:

- Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003
- Child Care Act 1991 & Child Care Amendment Bill 2025
- Domestic Violence Act 1996
- Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
- Children Act 2001
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2007
- Criminal Justice (withholding of information on offences against children and vulnerable persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (children and vulnerable persons) Acts 2012–2016
- Protected Disclosure Act, 2014
- Children First Act 2015