



Louth County Childcare Committee

Child Safeguarding Policies & Procedures

13th February 2024

Louth CCC Director

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Introduction

Louth County Childcare Committee (LCCC) is cognisant that every organisation working with or on behalf of children and young people should endeavour to raise awareness amongst board members, all staff, students' placements, and our service users (providers & parents) of the issues involved in relation to Child Protection. There is an onus on everyone to report suspicions or concerns relating to child safeguarding /child welfare issues. It is important for individuals to be familiar with the definitions of abuse and to be equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and know how to take a concern or an incident forward (Appendix 1 pp 19). While LCCC does not provide services directly to children, there some circumstances where we may come into contact with children, however staff will never be on their own with children, these are:

- LCCC workers are required to visit ELC and SAC services.
- At times parents may call into our office with children.
- Facilitating Stay & Play sessions.

LCCC operates under a child centred ethos and the best interest of the child is paramount in all work that is carried out.

LCCC workers will adhere to LCCC's child safeguarding procedures throughout the course of their work.

This document has been developed using:

[The Child Safeguarding Resource Document; Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedures Guidance for Early Learning and Care and School Aged Childcare Services in Ireland](#)

Tusla's [Child Safeguarding; A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practices](#)

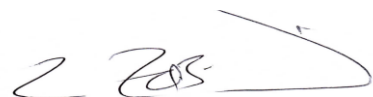
It is important to remember that City and County Childcare Committees are not Providers of Relevant Services under the Children First Act, 2015 and therefore are not required to have a Child Safeguarding Statement. Workers in City and County Childcare Committees are not Mandated Persons under the Children First Act, 2015.



Services Delivered by Louth County Childcare Committee on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

1. To support in the delivery of the National Childcare Programmes (NSP) by providing information, support and signing posting to re contracting, managing and compliance with these and any forthcoming extensions to these; support, information and signposting to childminders, parent/guardians, and other stake holders. This work involves the following activities:
 - One to one support in person or by phone, email or online i.e., Team viewer or Quick assist.
 - Deliver compliance information sessions either face to face or online.
 - Provide feedback to DCEDIY & Pobal.
 - Keep up to date information on our website/social media platforms.
 - Supporting parents/guardians in understanding their childcare choices and when they have concerns or complaints with childcare practice that are impacting on their child.
 - Supporting parents/guardians in understanding and accessing the NCP.
 - To support the DCEDIY in building a national profile of services, need and capacity, to better target investment and initiatives.
 - Undertaking research/consultation and the provision of information/data which will inform policy and or programme development when requested.
 - Maintaining an efficient communications strategy for the dissemination and promotion information to childcare services and parents.

2. To provide support to all ELC service providers (community, private, childminders, parent and toddler groups, after-schools) in accordance with all statutory regulations, national policy, and quality standards specifically in the areas of:
 - Access Inclusion Model (AIM) initiatives: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training to childcare services and Stay & Play session.
 - Facilitating AIM-related supports to services and parent/guardians and other stakeholders in applying and understanding AIM.
 - Children's First Child Safeguarding training to the ELC, SAC a. Followed up with policy and procedures supports and Child Safeguarding Statement reviews when requested. Signpost the services to the Children's First National Early Years programme website.
 - Information and support/one to one to all ELC, SAC and Child Minders (CM) re: Tusla registration/re-registration and Change in Circumstance (CIC). Support



also given on the outcomes from their Tusla's Early Years Inspection (EYI) plus Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI).

- Provide Aistear & Siolta CPD training for ELC, SAC and CM.
 - Facilitate Communities of Practice for ECL, SAC and CM.
 - Support and promotion of the National Childminding Action Plan. Provide ongoing supports to all CM and potential CM.
 - Signposting in relation to staff qualifications and standards, training and continued professional development.
 - Meeting new regulations and implementing the National Practice Frameworks.
 - Supporting early years services to utilise HIVE effectively.
3. To co-ordinate and administer small grants programmes and report to Pobal and DCEDIY.
- Childminder Development Grant Administration.
 - Parent & Toddler Grant Administration.
 - Learner Fund Graduate & Child Minders Administration.

Declaration of Guiding Principles

LCCC believes that the best interests of children are paramount. We believe that all children have the right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration in all decisions affecting them.

Our guiding principles are underpinned by [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#), Tusla's [Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and legislation including the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Acts 2012-2016.

Our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures apply to all paid workers, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation.

All committee/board members, staff members and other stakeholders must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

LCCC's Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) has been agreed and signed off by the board of Directors. The CSP has been made available to all staff and students, is also available to all our services users upon request. It is important that all employees, board members and students understand, accept, and agree to abide by the policy.

We will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years or

Child Safeguarding Policy Statement

LCCC is committed in promoting the wellbeing of children in childcare services in Louth. In our own company we aim to create a safe and healthy environment for children and young people who we may encounter from time to time. Our staff team are fully aware of their duty of care to children in childcare services we visit and the Stay & Play sessions.

This policy helps to provide:

- Safeguards and support for staff when they are working with services or facilitating Stay & Play session which puts them in direct contact with children.
- It informs all interactions that LCCC are involved with that raise reasonable grounds for concerns regarding child safeguarding/welfare issues or the quality of the practice within the services that come to the fore during these interactions.

LCCC respects and promotes the principles of equality and diversity with all children and young people in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish Constitution, legislation, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We promote this within our organisation and in the childcare services which cater for the children in the Louth area.

Good Practice Guidelines

Safe practice is essential in our work, we have put in place the following procedures to govern our work with childcare service in Louth in relation to safeguarding all children who avail of these services. All staff and those assisting Louth County Childcare Committee in our work are aware of the good practice guidelines and are familiar with the overall child safeguarding policy of the company.

LCCC has adopted the following policies to ensure the safeguarding of children in line with Children's First and Our Duty to Care:

- Reporting procedures.
- Confidentiality Procedure.
- Dealing with concerns about Abuse/Welfare of children and quality of practice.
- Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Workers.
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure.
- Garda Vetting Procedure.
- Disciplinary Procedure.
- Complaints procedures.
- Training
- Supervision and support.



- Code of Behaviour for staff and student placements.
- Communication & Parental involvement (Stay & Play sessions).
- Missing Child Policy (Stay & Play sessions).
- Use of Internet, Photographic & Recording devices policy (Stay & Play sessions).

Key Roles in Safeguarding

In line with best practice, LCCC have nominated workers to the following roles to safeguard children:

Named Person


LCCC have nominated a Named Person to lead on the development of the child safeguarding procedures for this organisation. This Named Person will refer to relevant publications to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice.

Named Person: Frances Morrow
Contact Phone Number: 087 3749929
Contact Email Address: frances@louthchildcare.ie

Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person

In keeping with best practice, LCCC have appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL). Please note that there may be a crossover of roles where the DLP/DDLP may also be the Named Person. The DLP will be a resource to any worker who has a child protection or welfare concern. The DLP is responsible for ensuring that organisational reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies. The DDLP will be available in the absence of the DLP.

DLP: Sharon Manning
DLP Contact Phone Number: 042 9336364/0874169820
DLP Contact Email Address: sharon@louthchildcare.ie
DDL: Frances Morrow
DDL Contact Phone Number: 042 9336364/087 3749929
DDL Contact Email Address: frances@louthchildcare.ie



Roles and Responsibilities of the DLP/DDLP:

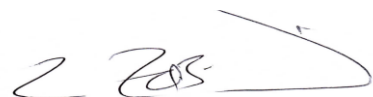
- Be fully familiar with the LCCC's responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children.
- Have good knowledge of the organisation's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that the organisation's reporting procedure is followed, so that child safeguarding concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Receive safeguarding concerns from workers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker through the Dedicated Contact Point, if necessary.
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of their organisation, using the Tusla Web Portal. If for any reason the DLP is unable to access the Tusla Web Portal, a hard copy of the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form and/or Retrospective Abuse Report Form may be submitted to Tusla by registered post.
- Record all child protection or welfare concerns, or allegations of child abuse, brought to your attention as well as any action taken in response to these concerns.
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage and store confidential records.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and The Garda Síochána, as appropriate.

Best Practice in Appointing a Designated Liaison Person/Deputy Designated Liaison Person

- The Board will appoint and name a DLP and Deputy DLP.
- The Deputy DLP will act in the place of the DLP when the DLP is not available i.e., annual leave or sick leave.
- The DLP/DDLP should be in a senior position within the CCC and should have a strong knowledge of Child Safeguarding procedures within their own organisation and should also have a clear understanding of how to make child protection and welfare reports to Tusla.
- The DLP/DDLP should be facilitated to attend training that is relevant to their child safeguarding role.
- Ensure that both the DLP and DDLP are accessible to all workers and that their contact details are available to all. Names and contact details should be prominently displayed.
- LCCC employ a hybrid model of working. All staff will have direct communication with DLP/DDLP via mobile phone and emails should a child safeguarding issue arise.

Recognising Child Safeguarding Concerns

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, states that child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.



- 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 abuse: Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child.
- Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, maybe, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

Tusla should always be informed where there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Children First National Guidance (page 6), lists the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence, for example, an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse.
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- A child saying, or indicating by other means, that he or she has been abused.
- An admission or indication by an adult or a child, of an alleged abuse they committed.
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

Remember, it is not up to the worker to prove that abuse has occurred, their role is to recognise the indicators of abuse and follow their reporting procedures and report concerns, through their DLP, to Tusla without delay.

Dealing with Concerns and Reporting Procedures

In the event of a member of LCCC staff being out with a service and they witness a child safeguarding issue they will bring it to the attention of the relevant staff member in the service, and they will act in accordance with LCCC's CSP.

All staff and students are expected to bring any child safeguarding concern which meets reasonable grounds for concern to the attention of the DLP or DDLP and seek their advice and guidance if unsure. Advice will always be given under the guidance of Children's First which directs our CSP.

While in a service if a child makes a disclosure or displays concerning behaviour in the presence of LCCC staff, they should:

- React calmly.
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the child/young person seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you.
- Do not promise to keep anything secret.
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions.
- Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser.
- Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record; Follow LCCC CSP.
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures which will be follow.
- Pass the information to the DLP or DDLP, do not attempt to deal with the problem alone.
- Treat the information confidentially.

Reporting Procedures in respect of the child

Dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse:

Staff/Student/Board member



Record information without delay



13th February 2024

Louth CCC Director

Report Concerns to the DLP or DDLP WITHOUT DELAY– Sharon Manning & Frances Morrow



DLP or DDLP and staff member consider concern under reasonable grounds.

An informal consultation with the duty Social worker may take place at this time.

If no further action is to be taken both the referrer and the designated person sign record of decision and file in a locked cabinet.



Contact the Duty Social Worker WITHOUT DELAY or a member of the local Garda Siochana out of hours if the child is in immediate danger.



Complete form

The Reporting Child protection/Welfare form is completed (written and post in www.tusla.ie/children-first in order to download form or www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/ to complete online), if posting sent to the address below.

LCCC must keep a copy of this form locked in a file which is situated in the manager's office.

Ask the Tusla Social worker for a written receipt of referral and store this form with other documents relating to the case. The initial reporter can go directly to the Tusla Duty Social Worker/ Garda particularly in non-availability of DLP or DDLP or where conflict of opinion regarding reporting to statutory authorities occurs.

Contact Details:

Tusla Duty Social Work Service,
Child & Family Agency,
Trim Road, Navan, Co Meath ,
046 9098560

An Garda Siochana,
The Crescent,
Dundalk, Co. Louth,
042 9388400

Recording

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Louth CCC Director

- All safeguarding concerns must be recorded on a standardised form.
- Records will be managed by the DLP and held in a dedicated child safeguarding file which is locked and accessible only through to the DLP and when needed the Deputy DLP.
- Records must be factual and include details of concern and any actions that have been taken in relation to the concern(s).

Legal advice should be sought at the earliest opportunity when there is an allegation of abuse against a worker

Reports of poor/dangerous practices that put the welfare children at risk of harm

- LCCC staff who receive third party information regarding concerns about poor practice e.g., not working with the correct Staff ratios (i.e., risk of harm due to inadequate supervision), hearing a staff member raise their voice in an inappropriate tone, will inform the person who disclosed the information that they should talk to the manager to make them aware of the situation. A follow up call should be made to ensure that they did follow up their concern with the manager. Support will be offered to the service/staff if they are facing any difficulties doing this. Staff will also be directed to the Tusla portal.
- If the information comes from a parent or member of the public and they give the name of the service, advise them that you will follow up with the service. If they are unwilling to name, the service you can advise them to make a report to the TUSLA unsolicited section. This will also apply to a staff member who does not want to be identified or is unwilling to name the service. If it is the case that a person enquires about the process of making a complaint about a service and does not want to contact the service, LCCC staff member should inform the person that we will be contacting the service to make them aware of the concern that has been raised and offer the service support to address the issues. However, if concerns around the safety of a child or inappropriate practices are raised during our discussions, we will follow our own organisation's CSP and will be obliged to take appropriate action.
- If an LCCC staff member witnesses' poor practice while in a service, they should bring it to the attention of the manager and the DLP of the service, offer support and follow up later to see if changes were made to safeguard the children in the service.
- LCCC staff should report any poor practice and actions taken with the LCCC's DLP or DDLP on return to the organisation. It maybe that a concern regarding the service and their response is recorded for further reference at a later stage.



Dealing with an Allegation of Abuse against Employees/Students

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee/student of Louth County Childcare Committee, there are two procedures that LCCC will put in place. These are, reporting procedure in respect of the child (see page 7) and the procedure for dealing with an allegation made against an employee (see below):

- The allegation will be assessed by the DLP or DDLP to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities, at this point. The DLP or DDLP may contact TUSLA for advice on the issue.
- The DLP or DDLP will follow the normal reporting procedure in respect of the child as stated in LCCC's CSP (see page 7).
- The DLP or DDLP will inform the Manager of action taken in respect of the above.
- The Chairperson/Manager of LCCC will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the employee in line with their employment/contractual agreement and in line with LCCC disciplinary rules and produces if appropriate.
- The employer should privately inform the employee that an allegation of abuse has been made against them and the nature of this allegation.
- The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond. The response will be recorded and passed on to Tusla should a formal report be made.
- LCCC will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- It is always essential that the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.
- He/she should be reminded that LCCC have a duty to investigate and report the allegation in line with their CSP.
- If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the DLP, the DDLP can step to take their place will deal with the reporting procedure.
- If a decision is taken to make a formal report the employer will notify the employee that this report has been made and to whom i.e., Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.
- LCCC will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and Tusla and any decisions on action to be taken regarding the employee will be taken in consultation with these agencies.



- The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this period and LCCC will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.

Legal advice will be sought at the earliest opportunity when there is an allegation of abuse against a worker

Confidentiality Statement

It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies and that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities regarding confidentiality and the exchange of information.


Confidentiality Procedures:

- All information regarding a concern about child protection or welfare should be shared on a need-to-know basis, in the best interest of the child.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given and this should be made clear to children and families using the service.
- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child or the reporter at risk or impede Tusla's assessment.
- Information will be shared as necessary and appropriate with Tusla, in the best interests of the child.
- Safeguarding concerns records must be stored securely, in a separate storage cabinet to other records.

If there is a situation where the DLP decides not to make a report, The DLP should advise the worker who raised the concern of this decision and the reasons why. The DLP should also advise the worker that should they remain concerned they can independently report to Tusla. In reporting to Tusla, the worker is protected from civil liability and/or penalisation by an employer under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently in good faith (Appendix 2 pp.23).

LCCC Code of Behaviour

There is a Code of Behaviour for staff and students which specifies acceptable and unacceptable practices relating to interactions with children while carrying out their work with LCCC. This applies to work both in the LCCC offices, in the community and when visiting ELC/SAC services or stay and play sessions. All staff sign up to and agree to the terms in the CSP and the COB (appendix 3 pp 24).



At all times, LCCC ensure that staff's interactions with children are at all times child centred and appropriate, in line with the Aistear Curriculum Framework, Síolta Quality Framework, the Access and Inclusion Model and other such relevant frameworks. See Below:


- Staff and Students show respect and understanding for the rights, safety, and welfare of children and young people.
- Work in a professional manner, showing sensitivity and respect for children and their families.
- Respect all relevant policies and procedures that keep children safe from harm.
- Comply with all relevant legislation and regulation in services.
- Respect and promote the principles of equality and diversity and works with all children in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish constitution and law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Staff/ Students should never be left alone with children while out on-site visits or at the Stay & Play sessions.
- There should be no unnecessary physical contact between LCCC staff and children. Physical contact should only be in response to the needs of the child and should be appropriate to the age and the level of development of the child.
- LCCC staff should note poor practice and discuss with the manager/person in the service and centres re Stay & Play, if unsure note and discuss with your DLP, DDLP or your manager as soon as you return to the office.
- LCCC staff should act if a child is in immediate danger. LCCC staff should support the service and centres re Stay & Play to activate their own CSP and follow their reporting procedures and that simultaneously LCCC staff follow the reporting procedures of their LCCC's CSP.
- LCCC staff will ensure that they communicate clearly to the centres re Stay & Play our role in facilitating the sessions and the obligations of the parents. This will also involve making them aware of our CSP and our Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS).
- LCCC staff will ensure that all parents attending the stay and play sessions are aware of our role and theirs in the Stay & Play sessions, by using our CPIP.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

LCCC has a recruitment and selection procedure in place for recruiting workers and includes the steps that must be taken to check and verify references, qualifications, and vetting documentation (appendix 4, pp.25)

Garda Vetting Procedure

Garda Vetting is conducted in respect of any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons.



Induction Procedure

LCCC have an Induction Procedure for new employees. As part of the Induction Procedure all individuals are furnished with the LCCC Child Safeguarding Procedure and Code of Behaviour, including information on child safeguarding roles in LCCC.

Induction Procedure will include:

- Name and contact details of the named person.
- Name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- Name and contact details of the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP).
- A copy of LCCC's child safeguarding procedures and Code of Behaviour.
- A copy of LCCC's Child Safeguarding Training Strategy.
- Instruction to complete the Tusla Always Children First eLearning Programme.

New workers will be given an opportunity to discuss and raise any questions relating to the child safeguarding procedures with the DLP.

Child Safeguarding Training Strategy

The company will provide employees with equal opportunity and exposure to training and development so far as such training and development relates to the business of LCCC.

Specific to this policy (CSP), all staff will:

- complete Tusla's Children First E-Learning on commencement of employment with LCCC, this will update by all staff every two years.
- Where possible LCCC workers will attend the NCSP Always Children First Foundation Level Programme.

Supervision and Support Procedure

The company recognises its responsibility to ensure that all employees have access to regular supervision and support for their work. All employees shall engage in individual supervision and support on an annual basis, the format will be individual meetings with the Manager. General support and supervision will be ongoing throughout the year, the format for this will be regular team meeting, as per an agreed meeting plan All staff may request one to one meeting with the Manager at any time if they believe there is a need. This is a two-way process which aims to maximise strengths and help overcome weaknesses.

Complaints Procedure

LCCC have a complaints procedure which outlines how to make and receive complaints about any aspect of the organisations (appendix 5, pp.28). Customer/clients or other

stakeholders can access or request LCCC complaints procedure and LCCC's customer/client's charter on:

- www.louthchildcare.ie
- clercial@louthchildcare.ie
- Ring or call in to the office at: Unit 4, Oriel Hub, Finnabair Ind. Park, Dundalk, A91HR99
042 9336364.

LCCC is committed towards dealing with all complaints received in a professional, trustworthy and confidential manner.

Disciplinary Procedure

LCCC's Disciplinary procedure commits to conducting disciplinary proceedings as quickly as possible without compromise to the thoroughness of investigations for serious offences and gross misconduct. A serious offence may involve breaches of the Company's Policies and procedures which includes the LCCC Safeguarding Statement and the Code of Conduct for employees (LCCC Employee Handbook).

The Standards of behaviour require employees to act in accordance with LCCC's Safeguarding Statement and an additional section details the safeguarding code of behaviour relating to interactions with children.

Sharing Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures with +Stakeholders

LCCC's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures are publicised on the LCCC Website and available to all stakeholders, (ELC & SAC services, parents, agency personnel, Board of Management, and students) via the website or can request a hard or soft copy from LCCC by emailing clercial@louthchildcare.ie or telephoning 042 3936364 .

Stakeholders will be guided on how they can make complaints if they are dissatisfied with the service that is being provided. A complaints procedure is in place.

Implementing, Monitoring and Reviewing Child Safeguarding Procedures

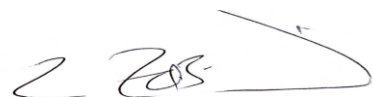
LCCC have develop a plan to implement, monitor and review our child safeguarding procedures and will ensure that they are adhered to.

Implementation

As part of LCCC's implementation plan for the guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures the following steps will be followed:

13th February 2024

Louth CCC Director



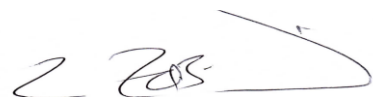
- Guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures to be presented to the Board of Management for endorsement as company policy and commitment to safeguard child protection and welfare, by all members of the organisation.
- The Manager as delegated by the Board of Management will oversee and ensure communication and implementation of the guiding principles and child safeguarding statement with all team members.
 - Initial team meeting following the Board meeting will announce the endorsement of LCCC's guiding principles and child safeguarding statement as company policy and procedure, taking effect immediately.

Monitoring

LCCC's child safeguarding procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis. This is part of the role of the Named Person: Frances Morrow.

Reviewing

Child safeguarding procedures will be reviewed, every two years or more often when required. This review will be led by the named person and will involve the whole staff team. Reviews will be conducted when procedures have been put into practice and gaps have been identified. Also, situations where the scope or purpose of the CCC has changed or new legislation or policy has been developed.



Appendix 1 – Types of Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- **Neglect**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**

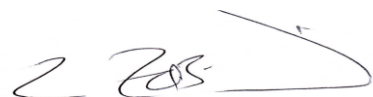
Neglect:

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences. Neglect 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.

A **reasonable concern** for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- 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 is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

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.

The following are features of Emotional Abuse:

- Rejection Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom) Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development



Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents.

A **reasonable concern** exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

The following are features of Physical Abuse:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning Suffocation Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Sexual abuse:

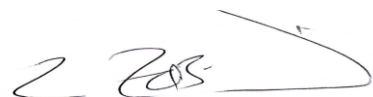
Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and



extended family members. Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

The following are features of Sexual Abuse:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
 - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person



Appendix 2

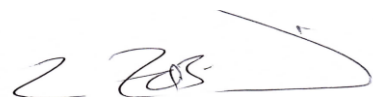
Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse ACT 1998

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardaí as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege. You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the HSE who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency i.e., www.tusla.ie and www.hse.ie (page 16 of [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#)).

13th February 2024

Louth CCC Director



Appendix 3

Acceptance of Louth County Childcare Committee Child Safeguarding Policy & Code of Behaviour (COB).

Surname _____ Forename _____

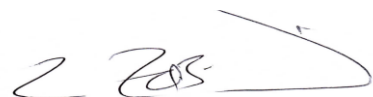
I have read Louth County Childcare Committee Child Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour and agree to abide by its contents.

Signature _____

Date _____

13th February 2024

Louth CCC Director



Appendix 4

Recruitment Policy

The Management of Louth CCC recognise that good quality employees is the key resource for achieving our aims and objectives. This recruitment policy demonstrates our commitment to recruiting the best candidates and our commitment to develop an open and transparent system.

Purpose

To ensure Louth CCC follows best practice in the recruitment and selection of employees.

Scope

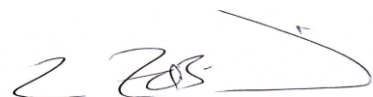
This policy applies to all recruitment at Louth CCC

Louth CCC will:

- Process all applications with courtesy and efficiency;
- Select candidates on the basis of their qualifications and/or experience for the vacancy concerned; and
- To give every person interviewed a fair and thorough hearing.

Louth CCC will not:

- Discriminate against potential applicants on grounds of gender, civil status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, race or



membership of the Traveller community; or trade union membership / activity

- Discriminate against persons with a criminal record; or Make any false statements in recruitment literature of job advertisements.

Internal Recruitment

Internal recruiting is the process of filling vacancies within the company from its existing workforce to fill roles that are best suited to having an insider's view or knowledge, as well as encourage loyalty and a sense of progress for employees and fulfil our obligations as community employment sponsor.

Our company will recognise employees for their skills and hard work. But above all, we want to make sure that our employees learn and succeed within our company.

Internal Procedure:

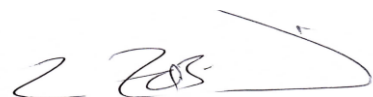
- Email notice of position / opportunity sent to all staff
- Expressions of Interest sought
- Evaluate applications
- Discussion / interview to ascertain suitability
- Offer amended contract to successful candidate

External Recruitment

From time-to-time external recruitment will be necessary when the vacant post cannot be filled by internal staff progression.

External Procedure:

- Review /Draw up Job Descriptions and Personal Specifications for the vacant position.
- Select appropriate sources to advertise the position in order to reach a wide audience.



- Formal application forms will be used and will be freely available to any person who wishes to apply for a vacancy.
- Form interview Panel which dependent on the particular post may include company Directors, the Manager and where required external experts.
- A gender-balanced interview panel will be provided where possible, but this may not always be feasible. The selection of persons who sit on the interview panel is at the discretion of the Management.
- Conduct shortlisting of applicants. When selecting candidates to be shortlisted, the criteria set out in the person specification will be used. The organisation aims to ensure that all selection for short listing will be free from any discrimination and that each application will be dealt with on its merits.
- The panel prepare appropriate interview questions and a scoring mechanism will be used for all interviews.
- The job candidates will be invited for interview by letter or email.
- Interviews will be scheduled and conducted in appropriate and comfortable conditions.
- The scoring mechanism will be used to identify the successful candidate and runner up panel.
- The candidate who has emerged at the top of the list will be informed by telephone that their application is being taken to the next stage of the selection process and that their references are being checked.
- If the candidate is not available or no longer interested, the next candidate panelled will be contacted.
- Unsuccessful candidates should be notified as quickly as possible by the Interview Panel.
- Feedback will be given to unsuccessful internal candidates to support them in their future development.



- Records of all applications, screening criteria and interview notes will be kept for a minimum period of 5 years by the Management in accordance with Data Protection rules, before being discarded.

Reference Checking

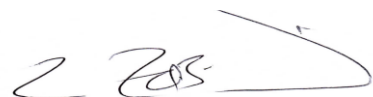
- Louth CCC will validate any necessary documentation relating to visas and work permits, where applicable.
- Candidates will be required to provide details of two previous employers for reference-checking. Successful candidates will have their references checked before an offer of employment is made. References will be checked by telephone and in writing to verify the candidate's identity and to check their employment history, qualifications, experience and suitability for the role and at least one of these should be persons who have acted in a Managerial / supervisory capacity in relation to the candidate in a previous employment, or in an academic capacity.
- References will be held on the employees personnel file.
- The identity of the applicant will be confirmed against an original (not a photocopy) official documentation (such as a driving licence or passport + Utility bill), which includes the applicant's name, address, date of birth and a photograph.

Garda Vetting

- In accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. Garda vetting is not a requirement of employment with Louth CCC, as we do not work directly with Children but is preferential.
- Where Garda vetting cannot be obtained staff will sign a declaration form with regard to their suitability to be involved in work that impacts on Children.

Offer of Employment

- The candidate will receive a letter of offer of employment. This offer of employment is conditional on receipt of satisfactory references.



- The decision as to whether references are satisfactory or not is entirely a matter for Louth CCC's management.
- The new employee will be required to complete a satisfactory period of probation, the details of which will be set out in the employee's contract of employment.
- If an employee is found to have given any deliberately misleading or incorrect information, this may lead to instant dismissal.

Commencement of Employment

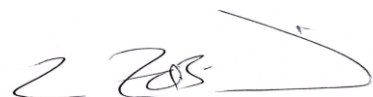
- The proposed date of commencement of employment is noted in the letter of offer.
- An employee's actual date of commencement of employment is in the Terms and Conditions of employment.
- Generally, no previous period of employment counts as part of an employee's continuous employment with Louth CCC

Induction

- All new employees will have an induction programme at the commencement of their employment.
- The purpose of induction is to help the new employee settle into the position as quickly as possible,

Temporary Employment

It is the policy of Louth CCC to fill all vacancies with permanent appointments as soon as possible. However, it can become necessary to employ persons in a temporary capacity pending the filling of a post or to cover annual, sick, maternity, or other leave. Temporary employment is generally intended to cover specifically the purpose mentioned above. This does not give anyone employed in a temporary capacity any entitlement to a permanent position or any entitlement to employment beyond the date/s specified in the employment contract or cessation of the purpose for which the employee was recruited.



Data Protection

Louth CCC will comply with Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 including:

- Obtaining and processing information fairly.
- Keeping it for explicit lawful purposes.
- Using it and disclosing it only in ways compatible with those purposes.
- Keeping it safe and secure.
- Retaining it for no longer than is necessary for that purpose.
- Giving a person a copy of his or her personal data on request.

Employment/Personnel Files

Legislation requires that we keep certain records on our employees. It is our policy to keep the following records for each employee:

- C.V. and /or completed Application Form
- Job Description
- Proof of identity (passport, driving license)
- References (Verbal and Written)
- Processed Garda Vetting Form
- Terms and Conditions of employment signed by employee
- Copies of validated Qualifications
- Copies of any other correspondence with the employee during the tenure of their employment
- Copies of motor insurance certificate showing indemnity to Louth CCC for the purpose of travel reimbursement for business journeys.



Appendix 5

Complaints Procedures

Louth County Childcare Committee (LCCC) is committed towards dealing with all complaints received in a professional, trustworthy and confidential manner. The only exception to confidentiality is in the case of a child protection issue.

What is a complaint?

Within the confines of our work /remit in Louth, we define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the provision of a service or services, this can be in the following instances:

1. By LCCC, as laid out under the commitments in our client charter.
2. By a Childcare service in respect to children and or families connected to the childcare sector that is subsequently communicated to LCCC.

1) Complaint of dissatisfaction of services provided by LCCC

Process for resolution


Stage 1

The complainant must make a formal written complaint detailing the grievance, this must include the following information:

- Complainants name, address and telephone number (email address optional)
- A detailed description of the issue with which you are dissatisfied
- The name of the staff member/s who dealt with you (if known)
- Date of Complaint

The written complaint should be sent to the Manager of LCCC, in the event the complaint is with the Manager then it should be forwarded to the Chairperson of LCCC.

The Manager/ Chairperson will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible, but no later than five working days after receipt. Having acknowledged the complaint, the



manager/ Chairperson will conduct an investigation and issue a reply to your complaint within 15 working days. Where this is not possible and interim reply will be sent explaining the position and advising you when a substantive response will be made.

Stage 2

If, having progressed through stage 1, the complaint remains unresolved or you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation by LCCC, you have the right to appeal to the office of the ombudsman.

The ombudsman is completely independent of the government and the service is free.

Nothing in this complaint procedure affects your statutory rights under freedom of information, data protection or other relevant legislation.

2) Complaint of dissatisfaction of services by a Childcare service to children and families that is relayed to LCCC

Process for resolution

When a complaint is received from a parent of dissatisfaction with services provided by their childcare service, LCCC staff will endeavour to resolve the issue in an open, objective manner. Every effort will be made at local level, to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of both parties.

At all times the parent should be informed of their rights and entitlements, and encouraged to resolve the matter directly with the childcare provider, in the interest of working in partnership.

The complaint should then be followed up with the provider to seek clarification to support a resolution.

In the event of;

- Disclosure/discovery of a Child protection issue, LCCC will revert to taking action under LCCC child safeguarding policy.
- Disclosure/ discovery of breach of contracts LCCC are charged with overseeing. LCCC will address the matter directly with the owner /Manager of private services, Manager and Chairperson of community Services as appropriate.
- Disclosure/ discovery of poor practice (*not a child Protection issue*) within childcare settings, LCCC will seek informal advice from Tusla preschool inspector and will address the matter directly with the owner /Manager of private services, Manager and Chairperson of community Services

Louth County Childcare Committee reserve the right to contact the appropriate persons / agency in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome or where there is an established pattern identified.



13th February 2024

Louth CCC Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'Z' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke ending in a small upward tick.