

## **Dundalk Media Centre CLG Child Safeguarding Statement**

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed with due regard to, and in accordance with, the Children First Act 2015, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), HSE Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement, Guidance issued by Tusla – Child and Family Agency, and Safeguarding Guidelines for Charitable Organisations working with Children (CRA, 2020). Policies and practices satisfy the requirements set out in ‘Children First: National guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children’ (Tusla).

### **Dundalk FM**

**Location of Service:** Our services are primarily located within our premises at Partnership Court, Park Street, Dundalk and on occasions we provide outside broadcasting and off-site training.

**Services/Activities Provided:** Our services are overseen by an elected Board of Directors and implemented through our organisation structure which includes volunteers, employees and placement staff.

Our services are implemented within the following Objectives:

- We provide training and access to the airwaves form community groups and individuals in Dundalk and the surrounding area.
- Dundalk FM recruits, trains, and supports community radio volunteers from Dundalk and the surrounding area to provide a community radio service.
- Dundalk FM is committed to maintain a safe environment for young people to take part in community radio programming and presenting.

### **Points of Contact with Children and Families (Direct and Indirect)**

Our points of contact with children includes:

- Their participation in broadcasting on site and off site (outside broadcasting), including shared spaces; hallways, reception and waiting areas.
- Their participation in training workshops both on site and off site, including shared spaces; hallways, reception and waiting areas.
- Their attendance at our premises for broadcasting and training, including shared spaces; hallways, reception and waiting areas.
- Their attendance on our premises for student work placement, including shared spaces; hallways, reception and waiting areas.
- Through our correspondence including application forms, supporting documentation and marketing.

### **Profile of children and young people accessing our service:**

Amongst our service users are young people aged under 18 years of age living within the Dundalk environs from multiple social economic communities. Our service users of this age are engaged

through their volunteering and school work experience placement as well as involvement in broadcasting (on and off site) and our training services.

### **Implementation of our Safeguarding Statement:**

Our Safeguarding Statement is observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while availing of our services both within our premises and off-site.

- Implementing safe recruitment and selection of volunteers, employees and placement staff who have access with children during our activities.
- Volunteers, employees and placement staff who are conducting relevant work (as defined in Part 1 National Vetting Bureau Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts 2012 to 2016) are vetted through the National Vetting Bureau.
- All volunteers, employees and placement staff attend mandatory safeguarding training.
- We manage allegations of abuse or misconduct by volunteers, employees and placement staff of a child availing of our service.
- Child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.
- Groups of children are always accompanied by a parent/guardian, teacher or member of staff while in our premises.
- Practices of recording keeping are implemented including the following: attendance register, accident and incident books, consent forms and cause of concern forms. All records are kept in compliance with our Data Protection policy.
- Our reception holds a sign-in book; all those entering our premises are required to register.
- A child in need of intimate care will be assisted only by their own carer.

### **Risk Assessment and Management**

We have carried out an assessment of any potential harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the corresponding procedures for managing these risks.

**Risk Category 1:** Child or young person be at risk of harm from volunteers, employees and placement staff.

The potential risk of direct harm to a child under this risk area is low, the rationale for this includes:

- a) A minimum of two volunteers, employees or placement staff will be present when a child is in a broadcasting studio. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for a child to work alone with an adult; our Station Manager is to be informed and is responsible for identifying and addressing this situation.
- b) Volunteers, employees and placement staff are advised to avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child away from others.

- c) Our service does not provide any activities which relate to physical examination and intimate care.
- d) Our volunteers, employees and placement staff participate in safeguarding training and are aware of supervision ratios and are staff are supervised by our Station Manager.
- e) Information that comes to our Station Manager or Company Secretary about a volunteer, employee and placement staff conduct is informed by our complaints procedures.

**Risk Category 2:** Risk of harm to a child from a service user (adult or child), visitor or member of the public (includes online risk).

For children and young people who participate in our services, we organise our activities with appropriate supervision ratios. We regularly collaborate with other lead agencies such as schools and related educational and youth work organisations which have safeguarding procedures in place. When children and young people are on our premises we have a dedicated toilet for them to use, waiting areas are supervised appropriately and our security measures include required sign-in registration for all at the front reception desk. Our online activity is managed through dedicated user names and passwords and we have a mechanism in place for monitoring social media usage.

**Risk Category 3:** Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a volunteer, employee and placement staff.

Concerns might come to the attention of volunteers, employees and placement staff and their capacity to recognise and respond to concerns is guided by their training in safeguarding, their understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, collaboration with related child and youth agency staff. This includes clarity on reporting with access to Tusla's online portal/contact information.

**Risk Category 4:** Risk of harm to a child due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015.

Our Safeguarding Statement provides for mandatory safeguarding training, reporting thresholds, display of statement within our premises, appointment of a relevant person to be the first point of contact, and regular review of statement at Board level.

### **Safety Checks**

The policy and procedures for child protection and welfare as outlined in this document are consistent with Children First National Guidance 2017 and includes:

- a) Dealing with child protection concerns (including the management of allegations of abuse against workers/volunteers)

Alan Byrne, Our Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015 (Station Manager) is tasked to manage allegations of abuse or misconduct by volunteers, employees and placement staff of a child availing of our service.

b) Reporting child protection concerns

Child protection or welfare concerns will be directly reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner by Alan Byrne our Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015 (Station Manager).

c) Working safely with children

We implement safe recruitment and selection of volunteers, employees and placement staff who have access with children during our activities. Volunteers, employees and placement staff who are conducting relevant work (as defined in Part 1 National Vetting Bureau Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts 2012 to 2016) are vetted through the National Vetting Bureau. All volunteers, employees and placement staff attend mandatory safeguarding training. A minimum of two volunteers, employees or placement staff will be present when a child is in a broadcasting studio. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for a child to work alone with an adult; our Station Manager is to be informed and is responsible for identifying and addressing this situation.

d) Recruiting and managing staff / volunteers

We implement safe recruitment and selection of volunteers, employees and placement staff who have access with children during our activities. Our volunteers, employees and placement staff who are conducting relevant work (as defined in Part 1 National Vetting Bureau Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts 2012 to 2016) are vetted through the National Vetting Bureau. Our volunteers, employees and placement staff who are conducting relevant work with children are managed on an ongoing process through our Station Manager.

e) Roles and responsibilities (including mandated persons and the relevant person)

Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015:

T: 086 792 5171

E: alanbyrne@dundalkfm.com

f) Child safeguarding information and training

All volunteers, employees and placement staff attend mandatory safeguarding training. Our volunteers, employees and placement staff participate in safeguarding training and are aware of supervision ratios and are staff are supervised by our Station Manager. Our Child Safeguarding Statement is available in public view on our premises.

g) Involving parents and children

Groups of children are always accompanied by a parent/guardian, teacher or member of staff while in our premises.

h) Implementing and reviewing the safeguarding strategies

We are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. Our Child Safeguarding Statement will be displayed publicly on our premises and will be made available to members of the public, and to Tusla, on request.

Our Station Manager is tasked with implementation oversight of our safeguarding statement and will inform the Board of Directors of issues that arise. Our Station Manager is the 'Relevant Person' which is a legal Safeguarding requirement to appoint, and is the first point of contact in respect of that Statement. In compliance with Children First Act, 2015 (sections 11.7 7 and 11.8), our Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed at intervals of not more than 24 months, or, as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers. This will include Review of Risks control document (Appendix One) which will be presented at a Board of Directors meeting.

i) Garda Vetting of Staff/Volunteers

Our volunteers, employees and placement staff who are conducting relevant work (as defined in Part 1 National Vetting Bureau Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts 2012 to 2016) are vetted through the National Vetting Bureau.

Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015:

T: 086 792 5171

E: alanbyrne@dundalkfm.com