



## **Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policies and Procedures (Revision date - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021)**

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* and *The Children (Northern Ireland) order 1995*.

In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

1. Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service and reporting to Tusla (RoI) or Social Services (NI).
2. Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children or vulnerable adults;
3. Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including identification of the occurrence of harm;
4. Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
5. Procedure for appointing a relevant person (Designated Liaison Person (RoI) / Designated Officer (NI)
6. Anti Bullying Policy
7. Photo and video policy.
8. Social Media policy

### **Implementation**

The Association and District Safeguarding Officers (The IACR Safeguarding Panel) will receive training in Child Protection and implementation of the procedures of the IACR before taking up their roles.

The Association Safeguarding Officer will establish and maintain channels for processing Garda Vetting (RoI) and Access NI (NI) police clearance for IACR officers and members working with children and vulnerable adults.

All mandated persons (and no others) will be vetted and provided with training by the IACR Safeguarding Panel.

### **Policies and procedures.**

#### **1) Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service and reporting to Tusla (RoI) or Social Services (NI).**

- i) In the event of the report of a disclosure of abuse, the incident is to be reported to a member of the IACR Safeguarding Panel.
- ii) The initial report can be verbal, but it must be followed up in writing, giving as much detail as possible.

- iii) The Panel will assess the report/disclosure to ascertain if it meets the mandated reporting threshold and if appropriate make a report to the appropriate statutory authority, depending on the jurisdiction relevant to the complaint. If in any doubt, an informal contact can be made with the relevant statutory authority for their advice and direction without disclosing any personal details.
- iv) On a need-to-know basis, the Safeguarding Officer to whom the report or disclosure has been made will inform the IACR President and the relevant Priest/Bishop of the church (if relevant) relating to where the report / disclosure relates.
- v) No investigation will be undertaken by the IACR Safeguarding Panel. This will be the role of the appropriate statutory authority.
- vi) The panel will assess if the parent(s)/guardian is to be informed before contacting the statutory authority. Consulting the parents is not a necessary step, but it needs to be assessed in the best interests of the child.
- vii) If the appropriate statutory authority cannot be contacted and the Safeguarding Panel / Officer believes that the child is in immediate danger, then they are to contact the Gardai or PSNI (as appropriate).

**2) Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children or vulnerable adults.**

- i) Mandated roles in the IACR are the four Safeguarding Officers, four Ringing Masters and anyone who trains or coaches children or vulnerable adults as part of IACR Association or District events.
- ii) People suitable for these roles will be nominated by the Association or District AGMs or by their Chairpersons.
- iii) All mandated persons will complete an IACR Safeguarding Application Form which will initiate the assessment process.
- iv) Garda Vetting / Access NI clearance will be processed and assessed by the Panel before they commence their role with children or vulnerable adults.
- v) References (with contact permission and details) and proof of Identity must be provided with their application form.
- vi) No volunteer may begin a role that involves working with or on behalf of children or vulnerable adults until they have completed all stages of the recruitment process, including training (see section 3).
- vii) The District Chairperson or IACR President (whichever is appropriate) will be informed when the recruitment process has been completed and whether the new officer / trainer / coach is able to commence their role in a setting that involves children or vulnerable adults.
- viii) Recruitment records will be retained indefinitely by the IACR Safeguarding Panel.

**3) Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.**

- i) Child Safeguarding Training will be provided by the IACR to all who are undertaking roles with children or vulnerable adults in two parts:
  - a. Using the Children First E-Learning Programme provided by Tusla.
  - b. IACR specific training provided by the IACR Safeguarding Panel.
- ii) Training for Safeguarding Officers will be provided by the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Officer (RoI or NI as appropriate).
- iii) The costs of training will be paid for from Association or District funds.
- iv) Records of training will be held indefinitely by the IACR Safeguarding Panel.

**4) Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.**

- i) The IACR Safeguarding Panel will maintain a list of current approved members who have been recruited, trained and vetting to work with children and vulnerable adults at their Association and District events.
- ii) The list will include their name, contact details, date of vetting, date of completion of training and commencement date (date when they were approved by the IACR Safeguarding Panel).
- iii) This list will be made available to the Ringing Masters of the Association so that they are aware of who is qualified to train / coach children and vulnerable adults at IACR events.

**5) Procedure for appointing a relevant person (Designated Liaison Person (RoI) / Designated Officer (NI)).**

- i) The Safeguarding Officer for the Association and each of the three districts will be appointed (or re-appointed) at their AGM each year.
- ii) These four Safeguarding Officers form the IACR Safeguarding Panel.
- iii) The District Safeguarding Officers are the Designated Liaison Persons (RoI) and Designated Officer (NI).
- iv) In the event that the District Safeguarding Officer is unable to act, the Association Safeguarding Officer will fulfil the role of the Relevant Person (DLO or DO) if required.
- v) If a new nomination is required during the year, the Association or District Chairperson (as appropriate) can nominate a replacement to act until the next AGM. All recruitment stages must be completed before they can commence their role.

**6) Anti Bullying Policy.**

- i) Bullying is defined as repeated aggression whether it is verbal, psychological or physical that undermines the confidence and self-worth of an individual.
- ii) Bullying can include cyber-bullying through social media or other digital means.
- iii) There can be an increased risk of bullying with people who have special needs, disabilities or are vulnerable adults.
- iv) Bullying in any form will not be tolerated by the IACR.
- v) Ringing Masters, coaches and other leaders of children and vulnerable adults will be given training in identifying the signs of bullying and be made aware of the IACR anti-bullying policy.
- vi) Any report of bullying will be taken seriously and the person who is making the report will be listened to calmly and accept what is being said.
- vii) Complete an incident form with the details of the issue.
- viii) Ensure the child or vulnerable adult is safe and keep them informed of how they will be supported, and the issue addressed.
- ix) Focus on their feelings rather than the facts to encourage a 'no blame' approach to finding a resolution to the bullying accusation.
- x) Bring the incident to the attention of the relevant Safeguarding Officer for advice and support.
- xi) Records of the incident are to be kept by the IACR Safeguarding Panel.

**7) Photo and video policy.**

- i) It is the policy of the IACR not to identify children (persons who are under 18) in photographs or videos that are taken and used by the IACR on their website, social media or printed publications.
- ii) Parental consent must be sought for photographs of children to be taken and used by the IACR.
- iii) The District Safeguarding Officer will ensure that written consent is obtained for any official photographs or videos that are taken for publicity purposes.
- iv) Casual Photos or Videos of those who are under 18 at IACR events are not allowed unless taken by the children's parents/guardians or with the written consent of the children's parents/guardians.

**8) Social Media policy for under 18s.**

- i) The IACR does not admit those who are under 18 into social media groups.
- ii) Parents are encouraged to join our social media groups to keep their children informed of IACR events.
- iii) All social media posts are to be respectful and courteous. Any abuse of this policy will result in removal from the social media group.

These procedures and policies are periodically updated and revised by our Safeguarding Panel and signed off by the President of the IACR. The current version can be found on our Website [www.bellringingireland.org](http://www.bellringingireland.org).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
IACR President