



Child Protection Policy

AN NUADHA PLAYERS

V0.3

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Definitions

An Nuadha Players, a community theatre group based in Maynooth, Co. Kildare and owner of this document, associated processes and documentation. (hereafter “**An Nuadha Players**”, “**Group**”).

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). (hereafter “**Child**”, “**Children**”, “**Young Person**” or “**Young People**”).

Member(s), a person who has paid membership to An Nuadha Players.

Volunteers, person(s) who are not members of the Group but are involved in supporting the Group for events and shows. Example: Front of House Team, Backstage Team etc.

Service Providers, person(s) who are engaged by the Group to aid in our running of productions. Example: Musical Director, Choreographer, Lighting Engineer, Sound Engineer.

Primary Carers, person(s) who are the legal parent or guardian of a Young Person or Child.

Designated Liaison Person, a person to whom a child protection concern can be brought to. DLPs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies as appropriate. (hereafter “**DLP**”).

Deputy Designated Liaison Person, a person to whom a child protection concern can be brought to in the event that the DLP is not available. This person shall also bear responsibility for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies as appropriate. (hereafter “**DDL**”).

Executive, a person who is elected to the committee of the Group and holds an officer position. Example: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Public Relations Officer.

Committee, the elected body of responsible persons for the running and management of An Nuadha Players.



Introduction

An Nuadha Players is committed to a child-centred approach when working with Children and Young People. This work is primarily involved in productions and activities that An Nuadha Players organise. The Group undertakes to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the Child or Young Person is paramount. The Group will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, 2017.

We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all members, volunteers and service providers;
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse;
- Confidentiality;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse;
- Complaints and comments;
- Incidents and accidents;
- Recruitment and selecting staff;
- Managing and supervising staff.

The Child Protection Policy comprises of:

- A statement of policy, which expresses An Nuadha Players commitment to providing a safe environment for any children and young people with whom it interacts;
- An undertaking to apply that policy throughout An Nuadha Players;
- Detailed procedures and steps to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is implemented across all areas of An Nuadha Players.

The Child Protection Policy Statement will be available to all Members and parents of Children involved with An Nuadha Players. The policy will be reviewed annually in line with An Nuadha Players Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Committee Elections - this is subject to change but is usually within the month of February and review of the policy will be noted in the meeting minutes.



Confidentiality statement

An Nuadha Players are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare the Group shall undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the Child or Young Person;
- Giving such information to the relevant persons for the protection of a Child or Young Person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the Child or Young Person are at risk;
- Primary Carers, Children and Young People have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the Child or Young Person at further risk;
- Images of a Child or Young Person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer. An Nuadha Players cannot guarantee that camera or video equipment will not be used at public performances.

Code of behaviour for members, volunteers and service providers

A code of behaviour for all of those involved in Group events and activities is an essential element of the Group's Child Protection Policy. This will help to create a supportive environment for members to provide a child-centred approach for Children and Young People.

The code of behaviour has been categorised under the following headings:

1. Child-centred Approach
2. Good Practice
3. Inappropriate Behaviour
4. Physical Contact
5. Health and Safety



Child-centred Approach

- Treat all Children and Young People equally;
- Listen to and respect Children and Young People;
- Involve Children and Young People in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise, regardless of ability;
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all Children and Young People as individuals;
- Respect a Child or Young Person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with Children and Young People;
- Lead by example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials.

Good practice

- Register each Child or Young Person: take a record of their name, address, phone number, special requirements, attendance, and emergency contact;
- Make Primary Carers, Children, Young People, Members, Volunteers and Service Providers aware of the Child Protection Policy and Group procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all Members aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of Children and Young People with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the DLP and follow reporting procedures;
- Encourage Children and Young People to report any bullying, concerns or worries to the DLP or DDLP;
- Observe appropriate behaviour;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep Primary Carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid taking 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;



- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift alone with a Child or Young Person and if you do ensure that the Primary Carers have given written consent;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with Children or Young People;
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language;
- Don't single out a particular Child or Young Person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise Children or Young People;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with Children or Young People.
Example: Events that are not structured Group activities.

Physical contact

- Seek consent of a Child or Young Person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with the Child or Young Person about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

Health and safety

- Don't leave a Child or Young Person unattended or unsupervised;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedure(s) and follow accordingly;
- For the avoidance of doubt, the responsibility for the safety and supervision of all Children or Young People involved with the Group lies with the Primary Carer.



Reporting

An Nuadha Players will appoint a DLP to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare within the Group and to respond to any concerns that may be identified. A DDLP will also be appointed to support the DLP where they are unavailable or should they be directly involved in an incident or accusation. The DLP and DDLP will be selected from the Executive of the Committee. In situations where the DLP or DDLP are unavailable, or are brought into question relating to an incident or report, a member of the Committee will be appointed to handle the incident in line with the policy and associated procedures.

The following excerpt from Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2 - p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) specific indication from the Child or Young Person that s/he has been abused;
- (ii) an account by a person who saw the Child/Young Person being abused;
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse [an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour];
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a Child or Young Person is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

It will be clear to all Members, Volunteers, Service Providers, Primary Carers, Children and Young People who have been designated to deal with child protection issues and how to contact them through this policy, which will be available to all relevant persons. The reporting procedure will be known and accessible to all Members in support of this.

Designated Liaison Team Members

Name	Position	Role	Contact
John Bean	Chairperson	Designated Liaison Person	087 978 2322
Saoirse Colfer	Marketing & Advertising Officer	Deputy DLP	087 650 7667



Recording of Incidents and Reports

An Nuadha Players will have an incident book for recording concerns about the protection of Children and Young People. This book will be stored securely and shall be accessible as required by the appropriate persons (the DLP and DDLP). The DLP or DDLP will report to the An Nuadha Players Committee at the closest Committee meeting any incidents or reports that have occurred, maintaining confidentiality at all times. In the event that there is no meeting scheduled, the DLP or DDLP shall have authority to call an interim meeting to discuss any incidents or reports.

The following information may be recorded by Members in relation to Children and Young People and should be reported to the DLP or DDLP:

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

Dealing with a disclosure

- Stay calm and listen to the Child or Young Person, allow them enough time to say what is needed;
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details;
- Reassure the Child or Young Person but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Don't make the Child or Young Person repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Explain to the Child or Young Person what will happen next (in an age appropriate way);
- The DLP or DDLP will be informed;
- All details will be recorded, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts in the incident book;
- All information recorded will be factual;
- The DLP, DDLP or appointed Committee member will discuss the concern or consult with the Primary Carers. Primary Carers will be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive (HSE) unless it is likely to put the Child or Young Person at further risk;
- Actions and outcomes will be noted;
- The DLP, DDLP or appointed Committee member will contact the HSE Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report, if appropriate;
- Information will be shared to required persons only and shall be stored by the Group securely (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement);
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern, as outlined above, the DLP, DDLP or appointed Committee member will contact the Duty Social Worker in the HSE area using the standard reporting form available from the HSE. (Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the HSE without delay);
- In case of emergencies outside of HSE Social Work Department hours, An Garda Síochána (Gardaí) will be contacted.



- In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a Child or Young Person, the Gardaí will be contacted.

Dealing with allegations

In the event of allegations being made, the protection of the Child or Young Person is the first and paramount consideration. An Nuadha Players has a dual responsibility in respect of both the Child or Young Person and the alleged person. The same person will not have responsibility for dealing with the Child or Young Person and the alleged person. An allegation will be assessed promptly and carefully. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a formal report to the HSE will be made following the procedure as outlined in this section.

An Nuadha Players will maintain a close liaison with the HSE and the Gardaí as required. All Members of the Group will ensure that their actions do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by the HSE or the Gardaí.

Further to the reporting outlined in this section the below will be supported during reports on allegations:

1. In respect of the Child or Young Person the DLP shall be appointed.
2. In respect of the alleged person the DDLP shall be appointed.
3. The first priority is to ensure that no Child or Young Person is exposed to unnecessary risk.
4. The reporting procedures outlined will be followed.
5. Both the Primary Carers and Child or Young Person will be informed of actions planned and taken.
6. The Child or Young Person will be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner.
7. The alleged person will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation where there is no risk to the safety of the Child or Young Person.
8. Where there is no risk to the Child or Young Person the alleged person will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation.
9. Any action following an allegation of abuse will be taken in consultation with the HSE and Gardaí. After consultation, the chairperson will advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.



Vulnerable Persons

This Policy and associated processes will also govern how An Nuadha Players will deal with **Vulnerable Persons** that become part of the Group and how the Group will endeavour to ensure they are protected whilst participating in events and productions. The HSE, Social Care Division, for the purposes of their policy and procedures, considers a Vulnerable Person as an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. *[Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy and Procedures' (2014)]*



Signature

This policy was adopted by the Committee and is enforceable from the last signed date of all signatories;

Signatories

John Bean

Signed

John Bean

Name

Chairperson

Position

Mar 30, 2025

Date

Saoirse Colfer

Signed

Saoirse Colfer

Name

Marketing & Advertising Officer

Position

Mar 29, 2025

Date

Witness

Ann Kelly

Ann Kelly (Mar 30, 2025 10:03 GMT+1)

Signed

Ann Kelly

Name

Treasurer

Position

March 30th, 2025

Date