

Irish Film Institute

Child Protection Policy

1. Child Protection and Welfare Policy Statement

We, the Irish Film Institute, are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people participating in events run by or on behalf of IFI. Our aim is to create a safe, creative and fun environment where children and young people across all levels can engage with the artform of film and where their welfare is paramount. To realise this aim, we will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children. We operate a code of good practice for all our staff¹, sub-contractors interns and volunteers working with children and young people at IFI or IFI events and have implemented procedures to cover the following:

- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse (see Appendix 1 for categories of abuse)
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selecting staff, interns and volunteers
- Managing and supervising staff, interns and volunteers
- Involvement of primary carers
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

Our Child Protection policy, procedures and practice will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Signed: 

[Sarah Glennie, Director]

Date: 30/6/2010

2. Parents'/Guardians' Co-operation

¹ Henceforth the term 'staff' will be used to refer to staff, sub-contractors, interns and volunteers working under the direction of IFI

In order to help ensure children and young people's safety and welfare we ask parents/guardians to:

- Bring and collect children on time for the activities
- Give us any relevant information (e.g. health, ability, emergency contact)
- Follow directions of staff (facilitators/leaders) when requested
- Complete and sign registration and consent forms for programmes as requested
- Consult website of Irish Film Classification Office www.ifco.ie for information on film classification, where relevant
- Note that staff at IFI are not responsible for children outside of programme hours

Code of Behaviour for staff working with children and young people at IFI or IFI events:

(i) To maintain a child-centred approach we undertake to:

- Treat all children and young people equally
- Listen to and respect children and young people
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, where appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Encourage a positive & fun atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Treat all children and young people as individuals
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers and/or accompanying teachers
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning a workshop or event. In the case of a cinema screening, this will include addressing young people on their own behaviour and outlining what is expected of them during the screening
- Endeavour to create an atmosphere of mutual respect at all our screenings and events, where boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions are made known

- Encourage feedback from event participants
- Show films appropriate to age groups in line with Irish Film Classification Office guidelines (see www.ifco.ie). In the case of a film festival, we will indicate clear age recommendations for all unclassified films
- Lead by example
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling activities, e.g. schools or exams
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation;
- Programme with an aim of reflecting a wide variety of world cultures and experiences

(ii) To operate a Code of Good Practice we undertake to:

- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the IFI Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Ensure all staff sign an agreement to adhere to our Policy and procedures
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures
- Ensure that visiting teachers/facilitators exercise proper supervision on all IFI premises and at IFI events, based on adequate ratios (recommended 1: 8 min.)
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures
- Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy as developed and operated by the IFI
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis
- Provide appropriate training for staff, interns and volunteers

- Report and record any incidents and accidents
- Update and review any 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; observe appropriate gender balance for residentials
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations; have guidelines and prompt sheet for artists; Encourage artists to refer to *Solo Practitioner Code of Practice*², or *Towards Best Practice*³ Guidelines in a school situation, as devised by the Arts Council
- Have written agreement with any external organisations with whom a filmmaker or facilitator is working
- Be active in relation to concerns, ie: don't "do nothing"
- Not let the problem get out of control
- Avoid taking a session on one's 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 to a child/young person; if this occurs, we will make sure that primary carers are informed
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If it is felt that something said may have caused offence or upset, we will try to address it in a sensitive manner

(iii) To avoid inappropriate behaviour we will:

- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people
- Not use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language*
- Avoid singling out a particular child/young person for unfair favoritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention

² www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Solo.pdf

³ www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/ArtistsSchools06_English.pdf

- Not allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Not hit or physically chastise children/young people
- Not socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities

* However, work emanating from the artistic process and work of artistic content will not be censored in this way. We will programme films for children and young people where possible according to the IFCO's film classification guidelines. In the case of unclassified films or film festival, we will indicate clear age recommendations;

(iv) In relation to appropriate physical contact we will:

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation)
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises

(v) Health and Safety

IFI operates Health and Safety guidelines covering all activities. To comply with these arrangements in relation to our work with children and young people, we will:

- Not leave children unattended or unsupervised
- Inform all visiting teachers/supervisors and facilitators that they will be required to provide supervision if a child is removed from an event for behavioural or other reasons
- Manage any dangerous materials and equipment
- Provide a safe environment
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly
- Ensure all filmmaking facilitators operate within health and safety guidelines and outline procedure at the start of each course

3. IFI contact about issues related to child protection and welfare:

Alicia McGivern has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

Alicia McGivern can be contacted at Irish Film Institute, 6 Eustace Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 612 9466.

Deirdre Quinlan has been designated as deputy to Alicia McGivern and can be contacted at Irish Film Institute, 6 Eustace Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 612 9445

4. IFI Confidentiality statement:

The Irish Film Institute is committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person
- Giving such information to others 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/young person at further risk
- Images or audio/video clips of a child/young person taken during IFI events will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances). If consent is obtained, images or audio/video material will only be used in the specified context

- Where image or information of a young person is to be used for promotion purposes in our publicity materials, on our website or in connection with IFI events, only first names will be used and specific information avoided
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy

5. Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary)
- Posts will be advertised widely
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form
- Successful candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary
- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a ‘risk’ will be employed or taken on as volunteer or intern
- Some of the exclusions would include:
 - any child-related convictions
 - refusal to sign application form and declaration form
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification
 - concealing information on one’s suitability to working with children
- There will be a relevant probationary period of six months
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda vetting, and where available, this will be sought



- Where relevant, IFI will seek legal advice when developing new policy and procedures in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of staff

6. Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary), children and young people, we undertake that:

(i) new staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern
- Undergo a probationary or trial period

(ii) all staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement
- Be provided with child protection training where possible.
- Offer evidence of Garda vetting if working directly with children/young people

(iii) volunteer/intern staff will:

- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement
- Be expected to sign the Declaration Form before commencing period of volunteering
- Offer evidence of Garda vetting if working directly with children/young people
- Work with supervision and support

7. Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

(i) We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant
- Comply with health and safety practices
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate

(ii) If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate

(iii) As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern

- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare

8. Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Deirdre Quinlan will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Alicia McGivern will deal with issues related to the staff member.
 - The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk
 - If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted
 - The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner
 - The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation; the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond
 - In order to protect children while allegations are being investigated, the IFI disciplinary procedures will be followed, pending investigation
 - The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible
 - The relevant staff member will work under supervision pending investigation or, if necessary, be suspended pending investigation or outcome
 - Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí

9. In the event of complaints or comments the following time frame will operate:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within two weeks
- Deirdre Quinlan will take responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person
- Verbal complaints will be logged and receive a response

10. IFI operates an Accidents procedure covering all events including work with children and young people. To maintain this procedure, we will:

- Maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in activities relating to IFI
- Record any accident/incident occurring at time of occurrence in Incident Book
- Cross-reference children/young people's details between the incident book and file
- Obtain proof from external organisations with whom IFI has dealings that they have public liability insurance
- Make First-Aid boxes available and keep them regularly re-stocked
- Make the location of the first-aid box(es) known to staff
- Make first-aid available in accordance with IFI Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books will be made known to staff
- Advise children and young people of dangerous material
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk
- Ensure filmmaking and workshop facilitators go through health and safety procedures with participants at commencement of course
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips

Location of First-Aid Supplies: Behind Bar, behind Reception

Location of Incident Book: Behind Reception

Appendix 1: Definitions of abuse

There are four main categories of abuse as outlined in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. The following is a synopsis of the information contained in that document. For the full definitions please refer to *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* 1993 (pp.32-34).

1. Neglect

“Neglect can be defined as being where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care....The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.” (*Children First* p.31)

2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse usually happens where there is a relationship between a carer and a child rather than as a specific incident or incidents.

“Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.” (*Children First* p.31)

Rather, it can manifest in the child’s behaviour or physical functioning. Examples of these include ‘anxious’ attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement and uncooperative or hostile behaviour.

“The threshold of significant harm is reached when interaction is predominantly abusive and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.” (*Children First* p.32)

Examples of emotional abuse in children include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carer
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way

- Under or over-protection of the child
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline
- Exposure to domestic violence

3. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following:

- Shaking;
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child

4. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves the use of a child for gratification or sexual arousal by a person for themselves or others.

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or involvement of the child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child... may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person

Private and Confidential
STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

In case of emergency or outside Health Service executive office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána.

An Garda Síochána, Pearse St., Dublin 2: 01 6669000

HSÉ, Duty Social Worker, Ballymun Health Centre, Ballymun, Dublin 11: 01 8467236

To Principal Social Worker or Duty Social Worker :

1. Details of Child:

Name:

Address:

Age/D.O.B.:

School:

Male:

Female:

1a. Name of Mother:

Address of Mother if different to Child:

Telephone Number:

Name of Father:

Address of Father if different to Child:

Telephone Number:

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

1c. Household Composition:

Name:	Relationship to Child:	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent’s view(s), child’s view(s) (if known).

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name:

Address:

Age:

Male:

Female:

Relationship to Child:

Occupation:

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers:

School:

Public Health Nurse:

Gardaí:

G.P.:

Pre-school / Crèche / Youth Club:

Hospital:

Other, e.g. Youth
Groups/After School Club:

5a. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes

No

5b. Are the Parents / Legal Guardians supportive?

Yes

No

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of Confidentiality)

Name:

Occupation:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name:

Date:

Occupation:

Signed:

Guidance Notes:

The Health Service Executive has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. The Health Service Executive therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive Personnel

- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the Health Service Executive.
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Service Executive personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

The Health Service Executive aims to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed

You should also note that in making a “bona fide report” you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998. If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

- (Local arrangements to be inserted).

Declaration Form to be completed by IFI Staff, Sub-contractors, Interns, Volunteers and Facilitators working on IFI Events in relation to children and young people

Confidential

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ Mobile No: _____

Any other name(s) previously known as: _____

Have you undergone Garda Vetting for working with Young People?

Yes

No

If Yes, please state year and name of organization with which you applied.

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people?

Yes

No

If yes, please outline reason below: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence?

Yes

No

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

I have read and understand the IFI Child Protection Policy and will follow the outlined code of practice in the context of my work. I will consult the Arts Council *Solo Practitioner Code of Practice*⁴ and adhere to Guidelines for taking and Using Images of Young People in the Arts Sector⁵, where relevant.

Signed

Date:

⁴ www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Solo.pdf

⁵ Guidelines for taking and using images of young people in the arts sector
<http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Guidelines.pdf>
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