**Naíonra Dhún Dealgan**

**Child Protection & Welfare Policies & Procedures**

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**Child Safeguarding Statement**

**Naíonra Dhún Dealgan**

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan, Muirhevnamór Dundalk Co. Louth is a registered Early Years Setting.

We work with children aged between 3-6 years of age.

We have two rooms and we can cater for up to 22 children in each room.

We have 5 full time members of staff all with a level 6 qualification, and 2 CE workers.

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan provides Early Years Care & Education through the medium of Irish, in a welcoming happy safe and friendly environment. We are affiliated with Gaelscoileanna Teo. We are registered with DCYA & Tusla. We adhere to the standards and aims of Síolta and Aistear.

We facilitate the holistic development of the child through play, in the care of highly qualified and experienced staff, where the child can hear and learn Irish naturally.

**Board of Management**

**The board of Management has the legal obligation under the Children First Act, 2015 to draft a Child Safeguarding Statement.**

* Chairperson: Annette Mhic Ardaíl
* Padraig Mc Canna
* Charlene Ní Ghreachain
* Máire Ní Mhaolchalann
* Lisa Nic Uiginn

**The management structure:**

The following people are all mandated Persons and have completed Children First Child Protection e learning Training.

* Máire Ní Mhaolchalann – Manager
* Lisa Nic Uiginnn– Assistant Manager
* Elaine Mc Cabe – Room Leader
* Siobhán Murphy – Room Leader
* Caoilbhfiona Morrow – Early Years Practitioner
* Roisín Fox – Relief Staff

The following members of staff are on a CE Scheme and are currently studying level 6 in Childcare. They have all completed Child Protection Training. As they are not yet fully qualified they are not mandated persons, and must report any concerns to DLP.

* Charlene Mulvenna – Childcare practitioner
* Aoife Boland – Childcare practitioner

**Commitment to Safeguard Children from Harm.**

* Naíonra Dhún Dealgan is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop.
* Naíonra Dhún Dealgan believes that the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount. We are committed to child-centred practice in all our work with children.
* We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to, and heard.
* Our policy and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Tusla Children First - Child Safeguarding Guide 2017, and the Children First Act 2015.
* Our policy declaration applies to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/ board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration and our child safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures.
* We will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every 2 years or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
* **Designated Liaison Person** for Child Protection.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Our Designated Liaison Person is:****Máire Ní Mhaolchalann****086 3928970** | **Our Deputy Designated Liaison Person is:****Lisa Nic Uiginn****086 2145866** |

In the event of Máire Ní Mhaolchalann & Lisa Nic Uiginn both being absent on the same day. Senior members of staff will deputise.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Board of Management has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending Naíonra Dhún Dealgan or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk Identified |  Who  | What is in place to manage it? | What future actions needed? |
| Recruitment | Board of ManagementManager AssistantManager | \*Recruitment Policy is alwaysfollowed with new when recruiting\*Induction Policy – all new staff are Given clear information about allAspects of service including info onCode of Behaviour and child Safeguarding policies & procedures.\*Garda Vetting PolicyHaving suitable & qualified staffWorking with children iskey to protecting Children from harm. | Policies are reviewed every2 years. |
| Visitors to service | Manager Assistant Manager | \*Procedures in place visitors are Required to sign in and out.\*Visitors are never left alone with Children. Premises are secure with electric gates,Security Cameras and buzzer system. Codes on main doors.  |  |
| Garda Vetting: | Manager Assistant Manager | \*Garda Vetting Policy\*New staff cannot commence Work until they have Garda vetting. | All existing staff will beRe- vetted every 3 years. |
| Additional activities | Manager AssistantManager | \*Fit kids/ Photographer/ Students – orany person who has directcontact with children will have to go through the same recruitment process. Garda Vetted, I.D, C.V. 2 References.And cannot commence Work until they have the above Documents have been checked &verified. All outside contractors will be fully Supervised at all times.  |  |
| Outings :School Tour- local indoor play areaAnnualConcertSports Day | Manager Assistant Manager | A risk assessment is carried out on playArea prior to visit.- Garda VettingCorrect ratios. Social media Policy.Permission forms. | These checks will be Carried out every year before events. |

1. **CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

As required by the Children First Act, 2015, Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Guidance for Developing for a Child Safeguarding statement for Early Years Services 2018 the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place

* Procedures to maintain a list of mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015
* A Relevant Person has been appointed
* A Designated Liaison Person and Deputy have been appointed
* Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures
* Confidentiality Policy
* Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees
* Procedure for Managing Child Protection Records
* Recruitment Policy
* Garda Vetting Policy
* Code of Behaviour for Working with Children
* Induction Policy (which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policies and procedures)
* All staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – *Introduction to Children First* and relevant staff have attended Always Children First Child Protection Training.
* Staff have access to regular Supervision and Support in line with the service policy.
* Complaints Policy
* Policy for Managing Outings
* Policy for Managing Accidents and Incidents
* Social Media Management Policy

1. **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**
* We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Naíonra Dhún Dealgan is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.
* This Statement will be reviewed every 2 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
* This statement has been published on the service website and is displayed in the service. It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with the service. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the Board of Management of Naíonra Dhún Dealgan.

**Signed**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For further information on this Statement, contact Relevant Person:

**Máire Ní Mhaolchalann / Lisa Nic Uiginn**

**Child Protection & Welfare Statement**

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to provide a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop.

We are committed to child centered practice in all our work with children and full compliance with Children First and Our duty to Care

We recognise the right of children to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them.

Every qualified member of staff including qualified CE workers is a mandated Person. As defined in the Childcare Act, 2015 mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports.

Mandated persons are people who have contact with the children and /or families who because of their qualifications, training and / or employment role are in a key position to help protect children from harm.

Management, staff, Volunteers and students in this service recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and our service will endeavor to safe guard children by:

* Having procedures to recognise, respond to and report concerns about children’s protection and welfare
* Having a confidentiality Policy
* Having a code of Behaviour for staff
* Having a safe recruitment procedure
* Having a procedures for managing /supervising employees,
* Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents
* Having a procedure to respond to complaints
* Having procedures to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect against staff members.

As part of the Policy, this service will:

* Appoint both a Designated Liaison Person for dealing with child protection concerns and a Deputy
* Provide induction training on the Child Protection and Welfare Policy to all staff, students and members of the board of management.
* Ensure that staff attend Child protection training as appropriate
* Provide supervision and support for staff and volunteers in contact with children
* Share information about the Child Protection and Welfare Policy with families and children
* This Policy will be shared with parents on enrolment with our service
* This Policy will be reviewed each time an incident is reported or every 2 years by Manager
* Work and cooperate with the relevant statutory agencies as required

**Child Protection & Welfare Policy**

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we intend to promote an environment in which children are safe from abuse, and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to, in order to achieve this we will:

* Check references of all staff
* Include all new staff on induction training and ensure all staff have completed the Tusla

e- Learning Child Protection Programme

* Have written guidelines drawn up about duties and responsibilities of staff and placements.
* Staff must adhere to settings Code of behavior Policy.
* Ensure that all staff and placements have access to a complaints procedure.
* Have a written policy, which is strictly adhered to, on confidentiality
* Have all staff sign a copy of our confidentiality policy
* Have clear management structures in place, with a Mandated Person/designated officer to liaise with the Tusla and Gardaí to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach and effective dissemination of information.
* Provide appropriate training for all staff to ensure that they recognise the possible signs of physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. In house training will be given to all staff.
* Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups
* The layout of the playrooms will permit constant supervision of all children

**Definition of Child**

For the purpose of this policy, a “child” means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

**Definitions of Abuse**

**Neglect**

“An omission, 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 affection from adults, medical care”. (Children First 2.2.1)

Some indicators include:

* Children persistently left alone without adequate care and supervision
* Malnourishment, lack of food or erratic feeding
* Lack of adequate clothing
* Inattention to basic hygiene
* Lack of protection and exposure to danger
* Non-organic failure to thrive
* Failure to provide adequate care for the child’s medical and development problems
* Exploited, overworked

**Emotional Abuse**

“Emotional Abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a Child’s developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met” (Children First 2.4.1.)

Some indicators include:

* Rejection
* Lack of comfort and love
* Lack of attachment
* Lack of proper stimulation(e.g. fun and play)
* Serious over protectiveness
* Inappropriate nonphysical punishment
* Family conflicts and /or violence
* Inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

**Physical Abuse**

“Physical abuse is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust”. (Children First 2.4.1)

**Indicators**

Some indicators include:

* Bruises
* Fractures
* Burns/scalds
* Abrasions/lacerations
* Excessive force in handling
* Shaking violently
* Mouth injuries
* Failure to thrive

**Sexual Abuse**

“Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others”. (Children First 2.5.1.)

**Indicators**

Some indicators include:

* Noticeable and uncharacteristic changes in behaviour
* Hints about sexual activity
* Age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour or use of language
* Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities that involve undressing
* Separation anxiety
* Depression, isolation, anger
* Running away, missing school
* Self-harm, suicide attempts, eating disorders
* Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse

**Signs and Symptoms-Guidance**

* These signs are not a checklist
* Respond to all observations of worrying marks/behaviour
* Record
* Consult with the line manager/DLP and seek advice from social worker and document as appropriate
* Assessment and /or investigation of abuse must be left to social workers and the Gardaí

**Recognising, Responding and Reporting Concerns about a Child’s Welfare or Possible Abuse**

In accordance with Children First:

Every qualifed member of staff and volunteers is a mandated Person.

Mandated persons are people who have contact with the children and/or Families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role are in a key position to help protect children from harm.

Mandated Persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla:
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.
* Everyone must be alert to the possibility to children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect.
* The Child and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.
* A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to Tusla.
* The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarized as follows:
1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority
2. Reports should be made without delay to Tusla
* Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.
* Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

*“A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by-(a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.”*

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and /or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

**A concern could come to your attention in a number of ways:**

* A child tells you or indicates that she/he is being abused. This is called a disclosure
* An admission or indication from the alleged abuser
* A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable
* Information from someone who saw the child being abused
* Evidence of an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way
* Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotion or physical neglect
* An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but an innocent explanation is given
* Concern about the behaviour or practice of a colleague

All Staff are expected to consult Children First and the Child Protection & Welfare Practice Handbook for detailed information on the sign and symptoms of abuse.

* Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending Tusla intervention. In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP/Mandated Person will contact An Garda Síochána
* If the child has made a disclosure, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made
* If there are reasonable grounds for concern the DLP/ Mandated Person will complete the Standard Child Protection and Welfare Report Form without delay and send it to the Duty Social Work Team in Tusla.

Duty Social Work Team,

Tusla Child and Family Agency

 042 93 92200 / 046 9098560

An Garda Síochána 042 93 35577

If the concern is urgent and the child is in immediate danger, the report to the Child& Family Agency will be made by telephone and followed up with the completed Standard Report Form.

In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána

The DLP/ Mandated Person may use the process of informal consultation with the Duty Social Work Team to discuss the response to a child protection and welfare concern and whether or not it warrants reasonable grounds for concern. Informal consultation is carried without providing the name of the family or the child. If advised to do so, a formal report will be made.

The DLP/ Mandated Person will record information about the concern, informal consultation (if carried out) and details regarding if and when the parents were informed.

**Procedure when a referral is not made to the Child & Family Agency**

Not all concerns will meet the reasonable grounds for concern. In this case, the concern and any informal consultation will be documented and kept confidentially and securely

The DLP will inform the mandated Person/ member of staff, volunteer, student who raised the concern that is not being referred in writing, indicating the reasons. The DLP will advise the individual that they may make a report themselves or contact the Duty Social Work Team and that the provision of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 will apply.

**Informing Parents about Child Protection and Welfare Concerns**

Good communication with parents is very important in ensuring best outcomes for children and any concerns about the health and well-being of a child will always be discussed with parents from the outset.

When a child protection concern is being reported to the Child& Family Agency, good practice indicates that parents should be informed about the report unless doing so may put the child at further risk. The DLP/ Mandated Person may seek advice from the Child and Family Agency Social Work Department in relation to this.

**Responding to a Retrospective Disclosure by an Adult of abuse as a child**

In relation to retrospective disclosures, it is imperative that all child protection concerns are examined and addressed.

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. If a staff member/ Mandated Person becomes aware of a retrospective concern they should follow the reporting procedure and speak with the DLP. If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the service should report the concern to the Children and Family Agency without delay.

Information about relevant support services may be provided to the adult if appropriate.

**Reporting Procedures DLP**

Every qualified member of staff including C.E. workers and volunteers is a mandated person.

It is the responsibility of Naíonra Dhún Dealgan to ensure that all staff and volunteers receive adequate and appropriate child welfare and protection training to meet our child protection obligations under the Act.

If you are concerned regarding any aspect of the child’s welfare the following steps must be taken:

* Inform Manager/D.L.P.
* Note the exact details of the incident
* Do not question the child of act shocked
* Mandated Person should inform designated officer - Mary Mulholland. Lisa Mc Guigan to deputise. (in the event that both Mary and Lisa being absent, senior members of staff will be appointed as the D.L.P and deputy D.L.P.)
* D.L.P/Mandated Person will contact the social worker for consultation or to make a standard report or contact An Garda Síochána – if a child is in immediate danger and social worker cannot be reached.
* Manager/D.L.P. informs parents of concern, and action taken unless this is likely to put the child further at risk.
* D.L.P./Mandated Person informs social work department (Standard Report Form)
* Exact details recorded of all steps taken
* If in doubt check it out – call duty social worker for informal consultation.

**Protection for Person Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998**

* Immunity from civil liability when reporting child abuse “reasonably and in good faith”
* Reports to Tusla, Designated Officers, or Gardaí
* Protection from employees reporting child abuse
* False reporting is an offence

 **Keeping Children Safe from Abuse**

* The setting’s policy on child protection should adhered to at all times
* This policy should be discussed with staff and parents and reviewed at least annually
* All staff should be trained to be aware of child protection issues
* Children should be informed and educated through schemes such as the stay safe programme with the consent and involvement of parents
* Physical and emotional or behavioural signs of abuse should be noticed in your day to day work in the Naíonra
* These should be reported to the manager/D.L.P of Naíonra or in their absence deputy D.L.P.
* Injuries, abrasions or significant changes in behaviour should be recorded promptly and accurately
* Naíonra manager/ D.L.P. or in their absence a designated member of staff should seek explanations from children, parents and other carers and make a note of them.
* Parents will normally be the first point of reference though suspicions will be referred as appropriate to Tusla.
* It is important to report any outstanding concerns and discuss them with colleagues or other professionals as appropriate
* All relevant legislation should be adhered to and staff should be informed of any policy changes and initiatives in regard to child protection.

**Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse**

* Naíonra Dhún Dealgan values and encourages the full participation of children within the setting. In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that the staff member involved deals with this sensitivity and professionally. The following guidelines are to support the worker with this task.
* Remember to take into consideration the developmental age and stage of the child

**DO**

* Stay calm
* Listen carefully
* Accept what the child says
* Reassure the child that they are being listened to
* Be open and honest and do not promise to keep anything a secret
* Tell the child what will happen next
* Record in writing child’s words
* Inform the D.L.P.
* Maintain confidentiality
* Remain supportive to the child

**DON’T**

* Panic
* Pressurise the child
* Show signs of emotion
* Promise to keep secrets
* Ask leading questions
* Make assumptions
* Make child repeat disclosure
* Start to investigate
* Operate in vacuum
* Delay or do nothing

**Confidentiality Statement**

* All information regarding concerns should be shared on a “need to know basis” in the interest of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
* No understandings regarding secrecy can be given. Children and Families and all parties involved will be made clear of this
* The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or Data Protection,
* Information gathered for one purpose will not be used for another without consulting the person who provided it.
* Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.
* Parents will always be informed if a report is being made to Tusla unless doing so would further endanger the child, impair Tusla’s ability to carry out a risk assessment or put the reporter at risk of harm.
* Under the Children First Act, 2015, information shared by Tusla with a Mandated Person in the course of carrying out an assessment, arising from a Mandated Person, shall not be disclosed to third party unless Tusla has provided written authorization to this effect.

**Confidentiality Policy**

In all aspects of our work here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan. Confidentiality is essential.

We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

* If parents tell you something in confidence you may be obliged to pass this information to the manager if it is in the best interest of the child/ i.e child protection issues.
* You must inform them of this, never discuss one parent to another about their children, it is important not to make judgments on families. Never discuss information about parents, children or other members of staff outside of setting with friends or family.
* **Methods** We keep two kinds of records on children attending our setting.
* Developmental records
* These include observations of children in the setting; samples of their work. They are usually kept in the Naíonra and can be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents. All work will be sent home weekly and a folder will also be sent home at the end of each year.
* Personal records
* These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
* Personal information about children, families and staff is stored in a lockable file whilst remaining as accessible as possible.
* Parents have access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
* Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person
* **Other records**
* Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
* Students on work experience or other recognised qualifications and training, when they are observing in the pre-school, are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.
* **Confidentiality Agreement**
* I agree to adhere to the Confidentiality Statement of Naíonra Dhún Dealgan as set out in their Policies and Procedures. I fully understand the importance of this agreement and I am aware of the consequences. Any breach of this Policy will result in disciplinary action or dismissal

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Manager\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **Role of Designated Liaison Person**

Children First requires that every organisation providing services to children appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for reporting neglect or abuse. The DLP is responsible for dealing with child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with Children First and Our Duty to Care.

The Deputy DLP will be appointed by the board of management to undertake the below duties when the DLP is on leave or is unavailable for a long period of time.

Designated Liaison Person Deputy Designated Liaison Person

Mary Mulholland Lisa Mc Guigan

Manager Assistant Manager

086 3928970 086 2145866

In the event of both DLP & the Deputy DLP being absent on the same day. The following member of Staff will deputise.

Elaine Mc Cabe Siobhán Murphy

Room leader Room Leader

087 0619396 087 414 1743

The role of the Designate Liaison Person (DLP) is a very important one, it is important that the DLP:

* Is a senior staff member
* Has a good working knowledge of the organisation
* Has good listening skills
* Has an understanding of abuse
* Is available

The Role of the DLP is to:

* Provide information and advice on child protection and welfare concerns and issues to the staff of the service
* Be accessible to all staff
* Ensure that the they are knowledgeable about child protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments
* Ensure that the Child Protection and Welfare Policy and procedures of the service are followed
* Be responsible for reporting and assisting Mandated Person with any concerns about the protection and welfare of children to TUSLA-Child &Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána
* Ensure that appropriate information is included in the report to Tusla Child &Family Agency and that the reported is submitted in writing (under confidential cover) using the Standard Report form.
* Liaise with the Child & Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate
* Keep relevant people within the organisation informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality
* Ensure that an individual case record is maintained to the action taken by the service, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
* Advise the organisation of child protection training needs
* Maintain a central log or record of all child protection and welfare concerns in the service

**Role of Mandated Person**

Every qualified member of staff including qualified C.E. workers and volunteers is a mandated Person.

Mandated persons are people who have contact with the children and/or Families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role are in a key position to help protect children from harm.

Mandated Persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla:
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

**Dealing with disclosures**

You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

* **DO**
* Stay calm
* Listen carefully and attentively
* Accept what the child says
* Reassure the child that they are being listened to
* Be open and honest and do not promise to keep anything a secret
* Tell the child what will happen next
* Record in writing child’s words
* Inform your Manager/ D.L.P.
* Maintain confidentiality
* Remain supportive to the child
* **DON’T**
* Panic
* Pressurize the child
* Show signs of emotion
* Promise to keep secrets
* Express any opinions about the alleged abuser
* Ask leading questions
* Make assumptions
* Make child repeat disclosure
* Start to investigate
* Operate in vacuum
* Delay or do nothing

 **Reporting Mandated Concerns**

As a mandated person, under the legislation you are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed

If, as a mandated person, you receive a disclosure of harm from a child, you must make a mandated report of the concern to Tusla. You must also report your concerns to the DLP.

**Making a Mandated report**

Under section 14 of the Children First Act, a mandated person is required to report a mandated concern to tusla ‘as soon as practicable’.

You should

* Submit a report using the required report form.
* Indicate that you are a mandated person and that your report is about a mandated concern
* Include as much relevant information as possible as this will aid effective and early intervention for the child

If you feel the concern may require urgent intervention to make the child safe, Section 14(7) of the Children First Act 2015 allows you to alert Tusla of the concern in advance of submitting a written report. You must then submit the mandated report to Tusla within three days.

**Joint reporting**

As a mandated person, you may make a report jointly with another person, whether that person is also a mandated person or not.

**Informing the family that a report is being made**

The Children First Act 2015 does not require you to inform the family that a report is being made to Tusla. However, it is good practice to inform the family that a report is being made and the reasons for the decision.

It is not necessary to inform the family if by doing so

* The child will be placed at further risk
* Where the family’s knowledge of the report could impair Tusla’s ability to carry out a risk assessment
* If you reasonably believe that by doing so it may place you at risk of harm from the family.

**Consequences of non-reporting**

The Children First Act 2015 does not impose criminal sanctions on mandated persons who fail to make a report to Tusla. However you should be aware that there are possible cosequences for a failure to report. There are a number of administrative actions that Tusla could take if, after an investigation, it emerges that you did not make a mandated report and a child was subsequently left at risk or harmed.

Tusla may:

* Make a complaint to the Fitness to Practice Committee of a regulatory body of which yiu are a member
* Pass information about your failure to make a report to the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochana. This information could therefore be disclosed to your current or future employers when you are next vetted.

All staff have an obligation to report any child protection concerns. Failure to do so report will result in disciplinary action.

The Criminal Justice (withholding of information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Person’s) Act 2012 requires that any person who has information about a serious offence against a child, which may result in charges or prosecution, must report this to An Garda Siochana. Failure to report under this act is a criminal offence under that legislation. This obligation is in addition any obligations under the Children First Act 2015.

**Mandated Assisting**

Under the children First Act 2015, all mandated persons that have a concern about a possible abuse, may have to engage with Tusla’s social work team to assist in the protection of the child. All mandated persons can be asked by Tusla to provide any necessary and proportionate assistance to aid Tusla in assessing the risk to a child arising from a mandated report. You must comply with this request, regardless of who made the report.

Mandated assistance may include a request to supply further information over the phone, produce a verbal or written report or attend a meeting.

The welfare of the child is paramount, it is very important that all mandated persons co-operate fully with Tusla this will be in the childs interest to do so. This will give Tusla the ability to make good quality evidence based decisions about a child’s welfare and / or protection is enhanced by co-operation and information sharing.

**Sharing information**

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 do not prevent the sharing of information on a reasonable and proportionate basis for the purposes of child protection. Tusla has the authority to share information concerning a child who is the subject of a risk assessment with a mandated person who has been asked to provide assistance. Tusla must only share what is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case.

Information Tusla shares with you, if assisting it to carry out an assessment, must not be shared with a third party, unless Tusla considers it appropriate and authorises in writing that the information may be shared. This is in keepin with the principles of data protection, which recognise that in certain circumstances information can be shared in the interest of child protection, but that such sharing must be necessary and proportionate. Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 makes it an offence for you to disclose information to a third party which has been shared by Tusla during the course of an assessment, unless Tusla has given you written authorisation to do so. If you fail to comply with this section, you may be liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to six months or both. This offence can also be applied to an organisation.

**Protection from civil liability**

If you are required to share information with Tusla when assisting in the assessment of risk to a child, you are protected from civil liability.

**Advice, information and training for mandated Persons.**

Tusla provides information resources on Children First guidance and legislation including an e-learning training module that all staff members must undertake. Naíonra Dhún Dealgan will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive adequate and appropriate child welfare and protection training to meet their child protection obligations under the Act.

**Managing Child Protection Records**

* Under the Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006, accurate and up to date records in relation to children, staff and service provision must be kept. The Early Years (Pre-school) Inspectorate will have access to files for inspection purposes.
* When: date, time
* Who: staff, child, Parent
* Any action taken-who was spoken to/reported to?
* Make a note as soon as possible after the event
* Standard Report form-DLP/Mandated Person
* It is important to record details in relation to children and their parents in a factual rather than a judgmental way
* Records should be held securely and treated as confidential
* Records are stored in compliance with 2006 Child Care Regulations.
* Parents may have access to the files and records of their own child on request but may not have access to information about any other child.
* Only employees involved with a particular child should have access to confidential files

**Access to personal records**

Parents may request access to any records held on their child and family following the procedure below.

Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the pre-school leader.

The Manager informs the chairperson of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement.

The Manager commits to providing access within 14 days - although this may be extended.

The Manager and chairperson of the management committee prepare the file for viewing.

All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. A copy of these letters are retained on the file.

'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.

It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.

When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.

A photocopy of the complete file is taken.

The Manager and chairperson of the management committee go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.

What remains is the information recorded by the pre-school, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.

The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the pre-school leader, so that it can be explained.

Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the pre-school or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the pre-school, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on child protection.

**Safe Recruitment Policy**

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan will ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected in line with the Service Recruitment Policy and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.

Under the Children First Act, 2015, All Safeguarding Statements must include procedures for the selection of recruitment of staff with regard to the person’s suitability to work with children.

The Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 also require Pre-schools to have a recruitment policy for hiring employees and unpaid workers, including the steps to be taken to check and verify references, qualifications and vetting documentation.

The following will be undertaken:

* All positions, including unpaid positions, will have a clear job description and personal specification including qualifications and duties.
* Advertising vacancies internally and externally.
* Requesting candidates to supply personal information on a CV and an application form (this can support the collection of consistent information from candidates.
* A scoring sheet will be developed, based on the criteria set out in the job description and the personal specification, and candidates will be short listed against this criteria.
* Interview questions will be agreed in advance, based on the job description and personal specification, and scoring sheet.
* Interviews will be conducted by more than one person. (Gaelscoil & Naíonra) It is the responsibility of the interview panel of at least 2 people and not one individual to appoint staff/ volunteers.
* All processes should be consistent and transparent(i.e. interview questions agreed in advance, scoring sheets and feedback to candidates)
* Prior to an offer of employment being made, two references from previous employers (including the most recent) should be supplied, verified and kept on file
* Prior to an offer of employment being made, two references from previous employers (including most recent) must be obtained. References from Family members are not suitable.
* Prior to commencement of position, satisfactory Garda Vetting must be obtained, in line with Naíonra Dhún Dealgan Garda Vetting Policy.
* The development of criteria on decision making regarding suitability in the event of a vetting disclosure
* Any child protection and welfare concerns that arise through the recruitment process swill be dealt with through the reporting procedures
* All new appointments should be subject to a probationary period of 3 months and a review meeting held before the post is confirmed.
* All employees will be provided with terms and conditions of Employment (employment contract).

**Personal File**

An up to-to-date and accurate personal file is kept for each member of staff that includes the following records:

* Proof of identity, photographic id.
* Proof of official Garda Vetting or Police Clearance
* Two validated references, including a reference from the most recent place of employment
* Verification of qualifications
* Investigation of any gaps in employment

**Induction, Training and Supervision/Support**

**Induction for new employees, students and volunteers**

As part of the induction process, all new staff, volunteers and students will be briefed on all the elements of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy including the ethos of the Naíonra, child centered practice and the Code of Behaviour, within the first week of employment.

All management, staff, volunteers and students will be required to commit to and abide by the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. They are required to confirm that they have read and understand the Child Protection and Welfare Policy with their signature.

**Training on Child Protection**

* All members of staff, C.E. workers, volunteers, students, contractors – anyone who will work directly with the children, will complete the Children First e-learning training.
* The DLP and Deputy DLP will be released to attend Always Children First Training and any other relevant training as identified and we will ensure that the DLP and Deputy DLP attend child Protection training every 3 years( if training is available)
* All management, staff and volunteers will be encouraged to attend child protection training and other relevant training as identified.
* Staff will be provided with information in relation to particular skills training to encourage professional development and best practice.

**Staff Supervision and Support Policy**

* All students, volunteers, contractors etc. will always be supervised in the setting by qualified members of staff. They will never be left alone with the children.
* Regular supervision and support is available to staff and volunteers, through one to one meetings and also group meetings
* Staff will be supported while dealing with a child protection concern.
* Each new employee will be provided with a mentor/colleague for the induction period, who will provide on- site support around implementing the services policies and procedures and general queries.
* Each new employee should receive a copy of the Staff Handbook, Policies and Procedures should form part of the Staff Handbook
* A signed record of the Induction Process should be maintained Ongoing Training Policy
* We will encourage staff to take advantage of such training opportunities as are relevant to staff development and to the benefit of the service.
* External training and attendance at conferences/workshops/seminars is encouraged and supported.
* We will provide opportunities for internal training, for example staff meetings, workshops, etc.
* Opportunities for Training in Child Protection, Manual Handling and First Aid will be made available to all staff
* Both manger and staff will carry out regular support and supervision meetings where any issues arising in the workplace can be addressed in a timely and supportive manner
* Staff will be encouraged to put forward new ideas, make suggestions for changes or to request additional training.
* Actions arising from Support & Supervision meetings will be reviewed at the next meeting.
* A Review will take place at the end of the every staff member’s probationary period and thereafter annually.

**Garda Vetting/ Police Clearance Policy**

All Staff Employed by Naíonra Dhún Dealgan/ C.E.Workers, Board of Management, Care taker, Students, Photographer, must be Garda Vetted before. All staff that lived outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult will need Police vetting from the country they lived in.

Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, it is a crime to employ someone in certain work or activities without undertaking Garda Vetting.

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 also require services to ensure satisfactory Garda Vetting for every worker both paid and unpaid.

Staff must demonstrate their suitability and competence for the post, as well as verification of identity. All members of staff, will need the following;

* Photographic Proof of I.D – passport, driving license, ID card.
* A CV detailing their qualifications and previous work experience as suitable to role.
* Copies of relevant childcare qualifications (minimum of FETAC level 5).
* 2 References, one from most recent/ previous employer.
* All references must be validated. This can be done over the phone. (How the person is known to the referee and they must provide information with respect to the period of employment and suitability to the role.
* Board of management, contractors and volunteers will need Garda/Police Vetting Photographic ID, 2 validated references.
* All Staff Employed by Naíonra Dhún Dealgan/ Fás, must have Garda Vetting. They will also need Police Clearance from any Country they lived in for a period of 6 months or more. CV’s with no gaps, References will be checked & verified before start date. Photographic id will also be required.
* Workers will not commence work until Satisfactory Garda vetting has been processed.
* It is a requirement that all staff, board members and volunteers are re-vetted every 3 years.



**Code of Behaviour**

We believe that the Code of Behaviour is a very important part of a Child Protection and Welfare Policy. It relates both to interactions with children and to what is acceptable between adults while children are present: it applies to all adults in the service including parents.

The Code of Behaviour is given to all staff and volunteers at induction.

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan our Code of Behaviour sets out clear guidance for staff, and volunteers. The Code of Behaviour can be used to:

* Explain to new staff how we work with children and what is acceptable
* Explain to Parents what they can expect from our service and employees
* Create a shared understanding of best practice
* Challenge an employee when practice is not at an acceptable standard
* Challenge Parents when behaviour in the service is not acceptable
* As a training tool

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**Positive Statements**

Use positive statement at all times. Try and catch the child doing positive things and give them plenty of praise. Tell the child what you would like them to do. (I.e. use words like walk, instead of don’t run).

**Positive Practices when working with children’s behaviour**

* Positive reinforcement
* Encouragement
* Negotiation, helping the child to problem solve
* Follow – through
* Giving children choices
* Establishing routines and limits
* Communicating clear expectations to children
* Redirecting/distraction
* Consistent approach amongst all staff

**Unacceptable Practices when working with children’s Behaviour**

* Deliberately harsh or degrading responses that could result in the humiliation of the child or the undermining of a child’s self- respect.
* Placing or keeping a child in a room that they cannot get out of
* Treating a child in any way in order to control behaviour. (any behavioural management issues arising should be discussed with the child and their parents and a consistent agreed management approach put in place).
* Any form of aggressive physical contact by an early year’s worker e.g. shaking,
* pinching, slapping or shoving, or other forms of aggressive physical contact.

**Communication**

**Do**:

* Listen to Children,
* Speak kindly and warmly to Children,
* Encourage and praise children,
* Treat children with dignity and respect,
* Use age appropriate language.
* Talk to children at their own level,
* Make eye contact and be conscious of your body language,
* Know how to deal with a concern about a colleague’s behaviour.

**Don’t:**

* Shoutat children,
* Ignore children,
* Use sarcasm,
* Make jokes about children,
* Put down or use inappropriate language.

**Managing and Supervising Activities**

**Do**:

* Planned Child centered activities,
* Have contingency plans,
* Ensure resources are available,
* Ensure staff with appropriate skills and interest in charge of activity,
* Adequate staff ratios in place.
* Involve Children in decision making and planning as appropriate.
* Ensure all children can Participate in an inclusive manner,
* Review and record key learning for next time.

**Don’t:**

* Do an activity only because staff like it,
* Try new activities without adequate planning,
* Leave children unattended
* Allow rough play

**Use of Technology and Images (photograph/Video)**

**Do:**

* Ensure written parent permission to take and use images of Children,
* Ensure images of children are not exploitative or demeaning in anyway (suitable dress)
* Report use of inappropriate images

**Don’t**

* Use child’s name and image together,
* Use mobile phones in workplace unless an emergency
* Contact children or parents on social networking sites

**One to one work**

**Do:**

* Be clear about the purpose of the work
* Written agreement with parent in place as to the details: time, duration
* Line management support and supervision
* Regular review within supervision and with child/ parent

 **Don’t**

* Take a child alone on a car journey
* Take a child into a room with a locked door

**Touch**

**Do:**

* Respect children’s privacy and dignity at all times
* Age and developmentally appropriate (e.g. infants and toddlers being held, sitting on laps, cuddling) if a child is seeking it and it is developmentally appropriate, in an open environment, intimate care (changing, dressing, safety, first Aid, comforting).

**Don’t:**

* Handle child roughly
* Inappropriate touch. (Caressing, breast, buttocks and groin)- Unless it is part of intimate care/first aid.

**Management of Day Trips/Outings from the Service**

**Policy Statement**

This service aims to provide children with a varied and wide experience once or twice a year we may organise day trips and outings. It is our policy to ensure the safety and well-being of children during these activities through planning, risk assessment, management and supervision of the activity.

**Managing and Planning Day Trips/Outings**

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan aims to provide children with a varied and wide experience and from time to time the service will organise Day Trips. The following will be considered in planning these activities

* All trips and outings will be planned in advance and a risk assessment will be carried out with regard to the following issues:
* Safety in regard to method of transport
* Facilities
* Activities
* Accessibility for children with additional needs and emergencies

**Keeping Children Safe on Outings**

* It is important to choose an outing that is suitable in terms of both their safety and their development
* Consent forms must be signed by all parents before children are allowed to go on an outing; these must include permission to take action in the event of an emergency and information on the child’s health/doctor etc
* We will ensure adequate insurance is in place
* Where appropriate, parents may be invited to accompany their children on trips
* Children will be appropriately supervised at all times with child ratios maintained 1:3
* This information must be readily available to the staff on an outing- a letter will be sent home specifically for each trip.
* A register of all children present must be kept and these must be checked regularly
* Children’s clothing should be suitable for the outing and weather, (ie sun cream hats raincoats and wellies) parents must be informed of any special clothing requirements but have the final say about what their child wears
* Non-controversial clothing must be adhered to when requested
* Safety measures such as frequent head counts, roll calls at key stages, name tags..etc

 Naíonra Dhún Dealgan does its utmost to minimse risk and ensure the safety of all children at all times. However, it is important that all staff are prepared for any emergencies that may arise and in this regard, a plan to deal with emergencies (such as critical incidents or an incident involving a missing child) will be developed for each outing. Staff will be reminded of any relevant policies and procedures prior to the day trip.

* A first aid box must be brought on the outing with a qualified First Aider
* Two fully charged mobile phones must be taken on outing
* A risk assessment must be done in advance
* Transport should be carefully planned and adequate insurance; NCT should be seen and photocopied in advance.
* Transport must be suitable and safe for journey. Each child must have their own seat belt. If safety requirements are not in place. Another form of transport must be arranged.

**Risk assessment on outings**

* Area must be checked prior to visit i.e local Park or nature walk - is route to park safe?
* Do you have to cross any main roads?
* Is there any stray animals running around?
* check for animal droppings, glass, needles or anything else that might put a child in any kind of danger
* If going on a tour i.e. farm/Play area
* Check area in advance
* Look out for any possible health hazards or risks
* Find out how many other groups will be attending on the day
* Arrange for children to wear same colour tops or hats/uniforms
* Child to wear tag with name and contact number
* Check out bus companies insurance, NCT, drivers license ask for a copy
* Make sure bus is in good repair , seat belts, breaks,

**When going out on any kind of outing the following items must be brought along:**

* The correct ratio of staff
* Child’s contact numbers
* Childs medical details
* First aid box
* Qualified first aid person
* Two charged mobile phones

**Dealing with Accidents or Incidents**

It is our policy to promote the health, well-being and safety of all the children in our service through the implementation of robust policies and procedures and by developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety, Although we adhere to all safety precautions and guidelines, accidents may occur.

**Procedures for Responding to an Accident/Incident**

* We will ensure that all personnel are aware of emergency numbers and that they are prominently displayed.
* We will ensure that all relevant personnel have up to date First Aid Training and that a complete First Aid Box is accessible.
* The safety and welfare of the child is always the first consideration if a child is injured or an accident occurs.
* After an accident, as soon as practicable, the accident Report form is completed and recorded
* The manager/ chairperson is informed of serious accidents or incidents.
* Parents are always informed of incidents or accidents involving their child and requested to sign the relevant form.
* The manager will review the accident and incident reports annually.

**Social Media Policy**

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we do not use social media as an additional tool for communication with parents and families.

However, Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan have a website that includes information about our Naíonra such as our Ethos, Policies & Procedures, Curriculum, staff details and a few photographs.

A social media administrator has been appointed by the Gaelscoil. Her role is to verify all social media posts before they are published online.

Staff should not contact or engage with children who attend Naíonra Dhún Dealgan on social media platforms.

Staff should not use their personal social accounts (for example, Facebook, twitter) to make or have contact with children who use the service or their families.

**Consent and Images**

* Consent is required from parents before an image of a child can be used on social media.
* We will always consider whether it is necessary to post the image of a child on-line. We are creating digital footprints for children which they are unable to consent to.
* We will never post an image of a child with identifying information.
* Photographs will be taken on the school camera not on employee phones
* Ensure children are appropriately dressed before posting any image.
* Staff are not permitted to have mobile phones during working hours
* Images of children are covered by Data Protection Legislation

**Service Events**

* Before any social event we send a letter home asking all parents to be respectful of others and not to share images of other people’s children on line. No access to the internet or no children to be photographed or recorded unless Pre-permission forms are signed for Christmas concert, sports day or end of year graduation etc. We would ask all parents not to breach this policy.

**Managing Challenging Behaviour Policy**

* When a child is exhibiting challenging behaviour we must try and understand why the child is behaving in this way? What is wrong?
* Staff will give a firm and clear explanation of why the behaviour is unacceptable.
* Staff will make sure that all the children in the Naíonra are safe and avoid any children getting upset.
* Staff will be calm at all times using child friendly language, by speaking calmly, clearly and firmly gain control of the situation. Encourage the child to discuss their feelings.
* Offering alternatives, positive behaviour is encouraged
* Give warning of the consequence if behavior does not stop.ie. They will be moved from one activity to another.
* Use the consequence for example, remove from the situation or remove toy.
* Divert the child’s strategies.
* Never humiliate or attack child self.
* In the event of a staff member having to physically intervene to protect a child from hurting themselves, another child or property, an incident report will be completed and shared with the parent.
* If the child is really worked up or upset, suggest a walk to let him/her release some tension and calm down. (Only take child outside if they wish to go).
* In the case of a particular incident or persistent unacceptable behavior we always discuss ways forward with parents.
* Inviting Parents into the setting to observe their child’s behavior, and work with staff,
* In the case of a child being totally out of control, after trying all areas to calm child down. Parents will be contacted to take their child home on that day, if this type of behavior persists the child’s hours may be reduced. In the event of no resolution being reached the child can be excluded from the setting if we cannot meet the child’s needs also taking into consideration the Safety and Welfare of the other children in the setting.

**Daily Role of Adult in Supporting Children’s learning**

* Provide appropriate resources and activities to stimulate learning with a high level of enjoyment, interest and motivation.
* Ensure plans for individual needs are being carried out.
* Observe and listen to the children before choosing the appropriate time to become involved in their play.
* Play alongside the children at children’s level offering sensitive support and timely involvement to stimulate learning and extend play experiences.
* Introduce target language in a natural and informal way.
* Use visual references, gestures, facial expressions, repetition and adult role play to familiarize children with target language and promote language learning.
* Get down to the child’s level when speaking to them.
* Listen to the children; add additional materials/resources to extend play.
* Use appropriate open ended questions to challenge their thinking, stimulate problem solving and encourage sharing ideas.
* Give children time to respond to situations to promote confidence and self-esteem.
* Encourage children to talk about themselves, their feelings, their families and experiences in small and large group situations.
* Encourage children to participate in all activities
* Support, encourage and praise their efforts
* Observe, evaluate and revise plan when necessary
* Smile, be happy, try and leave all issues from home outside as child can sense your mood.

**Responding to Complaints for Workers Parents and Children**

We work in partnership with parents by seeking their views and encouraging parents to participate in any decision making in relation to the service. We welcome comments/suggestions

* It is important that parents/carers and staff respect each other’s roles and responsibilities. Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we operate in accordance with the legislation outlined in The Childcare act 1991 and preschool regulations 2016, and to have the welfare and safety of the children as their main priority.
* We undertake to ensure all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly, impartially and confidentially.
* Parents will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation as part of enrolment/intake.
* However, should there be any concerns or disagreements regarding the care of the child it is essential that the parent/carer addresses the team leader/ Manager as **soon as it arises.**
* If a parent/carer should wish to have a more formal discussion with the Naíonra manager for any reason, a mutually convenient appointment should be arranged.
* If we find that we have made a mistake or that something could have been done better we will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in future.
* Complaints can be made by parents, guardians and other advocates on behalf of children
* If the problem persists, re-occurs or the parent is not satisfied with the response, the complaint should be put in writing to the manager/Chairperson of the Board of Management for formal investigation.

Chairperson

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan

Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan

gaelscdd@eircom.net

042 93 39389

It should be noted however that all concerned have a right

* To natural justice
* To hear the allegation against them
* To have representation
* To have the right to appeal
* The manager shall conduct an investigation and provide feedback within a timeframe not exceeding 7days from the written complaint

If a parent/ carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of this investigation the matter can be referred in writing to:

The chairperson-Naíonra Dhún Dealgan, Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan Muirhevnamór Dundalk

The issue will be fully investigated and a response given not later than 21 days after the written submission of the complaint.

If the matter cannot be resolved at this point, it may be referred to an external arbitrator, knowledgeable in the issue relating to the dispute

 **Procedures for Allegations of Abuse Against Workers**

**Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy**
It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff, students on placement or volunteers in our setting are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed alongside the complaints procedure and child protection policy.

All staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation against another member of staff or they themselves have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff. It is our policy that all allegations will be reported straight away, to the Manager DLP.

**Purpose**
This policy will be adopted in respect of allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. Naíonra Dhún Dealgan complaints and child protection procedures will be followed alongside this policy.

This policy will be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including a volunteer, student) has:

* behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
* possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
* behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children. This will include cases of verbal abuse.

There may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation:

* a Garda investigation of a possible criminal offence;
* enquiries and assessment by children’s social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;
* consideration by the Naíonra of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

**Supporting Those Involved**Parents or carers of a child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They will also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution. That includes the outcome of any disciplinary process. NB. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child will be told the outcome.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children’s social care, or the Garda as appropriate. The Manager will also keep the person who is the subject of the allegations informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. If the person is suspended, the manager will also keep the individual informed about developments at the pre-school. If the person is a member of a union or professional association s/he will be advised to contact that body at the outset.

**Confidentiality**Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered.

**Resignations and “Compromise Agreements”**The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, will not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing in mind the safety or welfare of children including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process.

Wherever possible the person will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. The process of investigating the allegation and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated will continue even if the person does not cooperate.

Similarly, so called “compromise agreements” by which a person agrees to resign, the Naíonra agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, will not be used in cases of alleged child abuse. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a garda investigation where that is appropriate.

**Record Keeping**A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, will be kept on a person’s confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference if the person has moved on.

It will provide clarification in cases where a future disclosure reveals information from the Gardaí about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction. In addition, it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record will be retained at least until the person has reached normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, if that is longer.

**Timescales**It is in everyone’s interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Every effort will be made to manage cases to avoid any unnecessary delay.

**Initial Considerations**The Designated Liaison Person should be informed, by the manager of all allegations of abuse against staff on the same day, even where the Gardaí are contacted directly.

The Manager will inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the DLP. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or where police or children’s social care need to be involved, the manger will not do that until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person. If the person is a member of a union or professional association s/he will be advised to contact that organisation.

If the allegation is not demonstrably false or unfounded, and there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion will be convened by the manager with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and other appropriate agencies, such as the police and social services.

In cases where a formal strategy discussion is not considered appropriate because the threshold of “significant harm” is not reached, but a police investigation might be needed, the manager will consult with the DLP, Gardaí and any other agencies involved with the child to evaluate the allegation and decide how it should be dealt with.

(NB. An Garda Síochána will be consulted about any case in which a criminal offence may have been committed.)

If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the Gardaí will take account of the fact that Naíonra staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour, under the Behavioural Management Policy.

The DLP and the manager may conclude that the complaint or allegation is such that it is clear that an investigation by the gardaí and/or enquiries by social care is not necessary. In these circumstances the options open to the Naíonra depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available, and will range from taking no further action to summary dismissal or a decision not to use the person’s services in future.

**Suspension**
Suspension will be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the Gardaí, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person will not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

The power to suspend is vested in the Manager and the Board of Governors. However, they will speak to the DLP who may canvass Gardaí /social care views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children, to inform the Naíonra’s consideration of suspension.

**Action in Respect of False Allegations**If an allegation is determined to be false, the manager will refer the matter to children’s social services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. In the rare event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the manager will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the staff/child who made it, or the gardaí should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate against the person responsible if s/he was not a child.

**Missing Child Policy and Procedures**

The management and staff of Naíonra Dhún Dealgan are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all children, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional or cultural needs. The Staff are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of children.

This very rarely happens, but complacency is a hazard we must avoid at all costs.  The welfare of children in our care is paramount.  Children may go missing and EVERY member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are.

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we have Systems in place to minimise the risk of children going missing.

* Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the premises and surrounding site is secure.
* Electric gates with buzzer system and security cameras have been installed.
* Visitors and Parents must buzz in through main Naíonra door.
* The attendance register is taken at the start of each session and the number of children attending recorded.  It is the responsibility of every member of staff to be aware how many children are present and a quick head count should be taken at regular intervals during each session.  Children who arrive late must be recorded in the register and those who leave early should be marked out accordingly.
* Key workers / Staff of new children should take extra care to be aware of their whereabouts and ensure they know the boundaries of where they can and cannot go.  Parents will be advised of our security procedures and be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns, particularly if their child has an adventurous nature.
* Prominent notices will be displayed to ensure that gates and doors are kept closed and where appropriate secure.
* Parents must be made aware of the need for supervision of children at all times especially while waiting for the Early Years’ Service to open and of their responsibility to ensure that their child’s arrival is acknowledged.
* Children should be counted before going out to play and again when they are lining up to come back indoors.  A member of staff should be at the end of the line to ensure no children are left outside.  Once inside it must be ascertained that the correct number of children are still present.

In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken.

* The missing child (children) should be identified and the last known whereabouts recorded. (The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child’s absence is noted as soon as possible. Staff must be vigilant in ensuring that children in their key groups or those allocated to them for a particular session are present). All remaining children will be gathered together and the register will be taken. This will also provide confirmation that the missing child was registered into the pre-school.

The senior member of staff present will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised.  (The remaining children should be gathered together for a story time/music session.  Without alarming them, the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child).

* Whilst the initial search is made, the supervisor or manager will talk to staff to establish the time of the child’s last sighting, the clothes that the child was wearing, and the mental state of the child (happy, upset etc.).
* A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area.
* All toilets, cupboards, under tables, cushions, anywhere a child might hide outside areas including play house, Shed, School Yards, tree area behind Naíona &
* Doors will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could have wandered out of the setting.
* The school grounds, car park, also check inside the school. Outside main gates, Shop, housing area, Church next door. Enlist the help of school office staff to search the school and caretakers to continue searching the school grounds

The Manager will then inform –

* The parents/carers of the child – alarming them as little as possible.  If they do not answer the phone a message must be left on any answering service before attempting alternative numbers.
* However if parents do not answer the home phone number, the Gardaí must be called before attempting other child contact numbers.  If contacted parents should be advised to stay at home or leave someone else in case the child arrives there.
* Parents will be made aware that we are contacting the emergency services and that a member of staff is searching the route the child may take home.  Parents should be asked for information of anywhere else the child may head for.  E.g. grandparents, other relatives, local park, etc.
* The Gardaí and/or any other emergency services – The Gardaí have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important
* The appropriate Garda in Charge – will need to know our systems for preventing this occurrence and what happened.  It is important that the Manager in charge keeps a record of events.
* Check route home (If the child cannot be located a member(s) of staff should search along a possible route the child might take to get home. Where able they should take a mobile phone to keep in contact.  If a member of staff arrives at the house without finding the child they should make contact with the school for further instructions.)
* A record of events should be logged in the Incident Book by the Manager in charge or by another member of staff delegated by them.

Dealing with reactions –

* It is natural that the child’s parents will be frightened, distressed and angry.  Other parents will be rightly concerned for the safety of their own children.  The Early Years manager and staff will also be shocked and upset at any lapse in security.  All emotions and reactions must be dealt with in a caring and understanding way.  However, until the situation has been fully investigated by all parties all staff must refer any parent and media enquiries to Manager/ Board of Management.

Monitoring and Review

* The Missing child policy is constantly being reviewed to take into account any changes with contacts or procedures.
* This policy will be monitored by the Early Years Manager, who will report to the Principal / Board of Management on its implementation on a regular basis.

Informing other people –

* As soon as possible after the incident the following people should be notified-
* ALL parents
* The Manager will inform Tusla.
* Social services will be contacted if there is a child protection issue.
* The Manager of the setting will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff and other adults in session at the time.
* The Manager will liaise matters closely with the LCCC throughout the investigation
* The manager will write a report detailing the following:
	+ The date and time of the incident
	+ The staff and children in attendance
	+ When the missing child was last seen
	+ What the child was wearing and any distinguishing features
	+ The estimated time that the child went missing
	+ The circumstances surrounding the disappearance
	+ The time parents and police were contacted
	+ The outcome – was the child found? a conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened. If the incident warrants a Garda investigation all staff will co-operate fully. In this case the Garda will handle all aspects of the investigation.