



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **Introduction**

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is an international organisation with over fifty years experience in passing our cultural traditions to younger generations through music, song, dance and the Irish language.

Under the new Safeguarding Of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection Of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (Scotland) Act 2007 voluntary sector organisations such as ours will have a statutory duty of care for the children and young people to whom we provide services.

The Code Of Practice is to safeguard the welfare of the young children in our charge and to ensure that safe and sensible steps will continue to be taken to ensure the safe practice and environment for young people, staff and volunteers alike.

### **Purpose Of Document**

- To adopt a Policy and Code Of Practice on safeguarding the welfare of children
- To plan the work of the Organisation so as to eliminate situations where the abuse of a child may occur
- Applying agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers
- Using supervision as a means of protecting children
- Ensure paid staff and volunteers are aware of this our Policy, Code Of Practice and Child Protection procedures to be followed

### **Compliance With Legislation**

This policy document and supporting policies apply to all Comhaltas activities across Britain and Ireland. They have been designed to work within current guidelines to meet the legislative requirements of each country. Should any conflict arise between any of our policies and procedures and the laws of individual countries then the relevant law will take precedence. We will endeavour to ensure that our policy documents are updated appropriately to reflect future changes in the law.



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The health, safety and well being of all our children and young people are of paramount importance to all the workers and volunteers who are a part of Comhaltas. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in all our activities.
- 1.2 In our activities we value our children and young people. A culture of mutual respect between children and those who represent the organisation in all its activities will be encouraged with adults modelling good practice in this context.
- 1.3 Comhaltas recognises that good child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with our work, including staff and volunteers as they can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that all workers and volunteers are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. Its aims are :-

- To raise the awareness of all workers and volunteers and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse
- To ensure effective communication between all workers and volunteers when dealing with child protection issues
- To lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection

### 3. IT IS COMHALTAS POLICY THAT :

- 3.1 Designated child protection persons within the organisation will take appropriate action including referrals to child protection agencies where necessary
- 3.2 Any action that the named person takes when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in line with current government legislation
- 3.3 All staff and volunteers working with children will be checked appropriately in line with current legislation
- 3.4 If any worker or volunteer suspects that a child in his / her care may be a victim of abuse, they immediately inform the named person(s) about their concerns. Abuse can be of a sexual, emotional or physical nature, it can also be the result of neglect
- 3.5 When investigating any allegations of abuse all parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive manner. We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential and we treat this in accordance with our data protection policy

All project workers and volunteers working with children will be provided with a copy of all our child documents to raise awareness of child protection procedures.

### 4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Provincial Council will review this policy regularly and provide effective management and training for staff and volunteers.



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### CODE OF PRACTICE

Comhaltas workers and volunteers must avoid where possible leaving themselves in the position where they are out of sight in a one to one situation with a young person. Unchecked persons must never be left unsupervised with young people.

It is inevitable, particularly at the earlier stages of musical tuition, in certain circumstances an extremely minimal amount of contact to the shoulder, wrist or finger may take place. It is essential that the permission of the student is sought and that the touch is appropriate to the situation. The inappropriate touching of any form is never permitted. Erogenous zones including the neck must be avoided at all times.

Wherever possible, no adult should be alone in a car with only one child.

Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions or personal relationships about people to prevent appropriate actions taking place.

Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.

An environment that allows bullying, shouting, racism or sexism is not acceptable.

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### DEFINITIONS

All workers and volunteers within the organisation need to be aware of the broad definitions of abuse as they may take many forms.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent ill effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**SEXUAL ABUSE** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**NEGLECT** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.