

Child Protection Policy of Mayo Education Centre

Introductory Statement

The staff and Management Committee of **Mayo Education Centre** have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

This policy should be read in conjunction with *Children First- National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children 1999)* and with reference to the Department of Education and Science *Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures(Primary and Post Primary) , Our Duty of Care (Department of Health and Children)* and *Child Protection Guidelines for persons employed by the Department of Education and Science.(2007)*.

For the purposes of this policy a “child” is any person under the age of 18 years who is not/has not been married (as defined in *Children First*)

An individual copy of this policy document will be made available to all staff and members of Management Committee and the texts referenced above are available in our library.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with this document.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe environment for all users of our Centre and for the participants in any activities organised by the Centre
- Develop an awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the staff and Management Committee of the Centre
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children (engaged in Centre related activities) and staff
- Ensure that all staff are aware of *Children First* and the guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and /or disclosures of child abuse
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all staff

Procedures

- All staff in the Centre will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in *Children First* and the Department of Education and Science *Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures*
- The Management Committee of the **Mayo Education Centre** has appointed **Art Ó Súileabháin** as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and **Patricia Carney** as the deputy DLP.

Each of these persons has received training in Child Protection.

- The Management Committee of **Mayo Education Centre** will engage in safe procedures for the Recruitment of Staff and volunteers.
- As and from the commencement of this policy all potential staff will be asked as part of their application process to sign a declaration relating to past criminal records or allowing the Centre to seek Garda Clearance. Documentation such as driver's licence or Passport will also be asked for to confirm identity.

It is acknowledged that no matter how good recruitment and selection procedures are they are not foolproof, so practices to ensure good management and supervision of staff will also be adhered to.

- The staff and Management have agreed that:
 1. All concerns/disclosures involving child protection /child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP(or Deputy DLP if appropriate)
 2. Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report
 3. A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality will be maintained. (information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a "need to know basis")
 4. If a report is filed against a member of staff at Mayo Education Centre, then the Board of Management will seek to have the safety of the Mayo Education Centre maintained for all users and may have the specified member of staff put on leave to maintain that safety. The person against whom a report is filed will be made aware of the report.

The DLP will file all reports confidentially and will fulfil their responsibilities in relation to these concerns as laid out in *Children First* and *Child Protection Guidelines for persons employed by the Department of Education and Science*.(2007).

Practices

The staff and management of **Mayo Education Centre** have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and management Committee have agreed the following practices to be adopted:

1. Visits by Children to the Centre (e.g. exhibitions, demonstrations, prize giving, special tuition etc)

- I. All children visiting the Centre should be accompanied by a teacher (during school day) or parent/guardian.
- II. Children are not left unattended in the Centre or in the car park of the Centre.
- III. Dangerous behaviour is not allowed.
- IV. If a group of children are visiting the Centre the same ratio of adults to children should apply as would apply in the school setting or on any school outing. All groups of children must be accompanied by adults.
- V. The adults accompanying the children should be made aware that they are responsible for the safety, supervision and wellbeing of the children, while on the premises. This includes the supervision of safe toileting.
- VI. The same guidelines apply if any external group (other than a school) is bringing children into the Centre. E.g. FAS, Junior Achievement Ireland, Scríobh Leabhar, Write a Book, Coder Dojo or other such events as are organised in the **Mayo Education Centre** or in conjunction with the **Mayo Education Centre**.
- VII. Centre Staff are not responsible for supervising children but will draw to the attention of the accompanying adults if there is a breach of any of the above.

2. Activities arranged by the Centre in an outside venue (Hotel) e.g. Write a book

- I. The same guidelines apply as in 1. above

3. Literacy & Numeracy Initiatives:

Staff involved in Literacy & Numeracy Initiatives are asked to ensure that best practice with regard to engaging with children is followed at all times ,ie-

- I. parental consent is obtained for the one-one work where this is required as part of the work
- II. one-one work is viewable at all times if this one on one work is used at all
- III. arrangements are in place to ensure that the children can access toilet facilities safely (see Reference 1. V)
- IV. Arrangements are in place for the safe delivery and collection of the children from the premises. Parents should remain present on the premises during these sessions.

4. Students on Job Placements

- I. Our Centre facilitates TY students on job placements during the year. Before the commencement of each placement, the school is requested by us to inform us of the name of the DLP in the school.
- II. We inform the school of our Child Protection Policy and make a copy of the policy available to them.
- III. We ensure that the student is aware also of the policy and knows who the DLP / Deputy DLP are in the Centre.
- IV. We ensure that the student is made aware of all other policies pertaining to their safety in the Centre, including Health and safety and Internet Safety.

5. Employees who are under the age of 18

- I. From time to time **Mayo Education Centre** may employ young persons aged 16 or 17.
- II. The Centre follows stringently the guidelines laid down for such employment *in Protection of Young Persons Act 1996*
- III. Special care is taken to ensure that any employees who are under the age of 18 are aware of our Child Protection Policy

6. Employees/Volunteers who visit schools

All seconded personnel employed by our Centre have received Child Protection Training as required by the Department of Education and Skills. They are fully aware that they are expected to behave professionally at all times in their dealings with schools and children and are aware of their responsibilities regarding the child Protection.

Mayo Education Centre will provide training re Child protection for our staff/volunteers (e.g Coordinator for Something Fishy, Write a Book, Scríobh Leabhar etc.) who work with pupils in the local schools. A copy of this policy will be made available to them and they will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding Child Protection.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Internet Safety Policy and our Health and Safety Statement which provide for the welfare and safety of all users of our premises.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Management Committee on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Management Committee will ensure that adequate training/information and support is provided for all staff and members of the Management Committee.

This policy will be published on our Website so that all schools can have easy access to it.

Policy adopted by Management Committee on 28th May 2012

Art Ó Súilleabháin Director

Mary Nyland Chairperson