

# Our Child Protection Policy

## Information for Parents/Guardians

Here at West Cork Arts Centre we are committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. Children's welfare and safety is our top priority. We comply with Children First: National Guidelines for Child Protection and Welfare. To help us achieve this, we have a Child Protection Policy and Procedures which guide our work. Copies of our Child Protection Policy are available at reception and on our website.

Parents/guardians are children's primary carers. We work in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure children's safety and enjoyment of the activities we offer. We believe that children and adults will obtain the greatest benefits from our centre if everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their creativity and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone. We ask you to take some time to read our Guidelines and Programme Information. If you have any questions or concerns you can talk to Justine Foster our Designated Person for Child Protection.

West Cork Arts Centre respects the rights of the child and promotes a child-centred ethos: listen to children, value and respect children as individuals, involve children in decision making where possible and as appropriate.

### **Here are some questions you might want to ask:**

#### **What is a child protection policy?**

A child protection policy is a statement of the organisation's commitment to keep children and young people safe and to report any concerns about their welfare. Our policy contains procedures on how this is carried out.

#### **What should I expect from an activity or group my child takes part in?**

- You can expect your child's safety and welfare to be the top priority.
- An exchange of information and consent will take place when you enroll your child at West Cork Arts Centre
- You will be asked for important relevant information, such as emergency contact details and any health information which we will keep on file while your child is attending the Centre..
- You can expect that staff or volunteers are carefully selected and suitable to work with children and young people.

#### **What does confidentiality mean?**

Confidentiality means that information in relation to you or your children will only be shared with people who 'need to know'. Personal information about your family will be treated with respect and records will be securely stored.

#### **Who does the organisation report to, if they have a child protection concern about a child or young person?**

- If we have a child protection concern about a child we are legally obliged to report it to a Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive (HSE), or in an emergency, to An Garda Síochána.

- Reckless endangerment of children is a criminal offence under Irish law which could result in criminal prosecution and imprisonment for failure to comply with the relevant provisions of the appropriate legislation.

#### What information will be passed on?

- We will pass on the child's name, address and age, your name and address and we will say what the reason for concern is.
- We will also include the name of the person making the report.
- Anyone making a report of suspected child abuse, provided they act 'reasonably and in good faith' will have immunity from civil liability (Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998).

#### Do I have a right to see information about me or my child?

Yes. You have a right to see any records that are kept about you or your children.

#### Is there a code of behaviour for staff, children and young people, volunteers, parents?

- Yes. A code of behaviour for staff, including volunteers, is part of our Child Protection Policy.
- We have a code of behaviour for children and young people. We expect children to behave appropriately on the premises and respect other children and centre users. We follow a clear code of conduct with positive reinforcement as our central approach. Children will receive a gentle warning for use of inappropriate language or behavior. If the child persists they will be asked to sit out of the session and parents will be informed. Working together with parents on encouraging appropriate behaviour is key.
- We have an anti-bullying policy.
- We also ask parents/guardians to comply with certain measures to ensure their children's safety (see below).

#### Who can I talk to if I have a concern about a child?

- If you have a concern about a child or young person, you can talk to Justine Foster our Designated Person. She will listen to your concern and explain our Child Protection Policy to you.
- Alternatively, you can contact a Duty Social worker in the HSE directly.

#### Is there a complaints policy? Who can I talk to if I have a complaint?

- Yes, we have a complaints policy.
- If you have a complaint you can talk or write to Justine Foster, [justine@westcorkartscentre.com](mailto:justine@westcorkartscentre.com).

#### Does West Cork Arts Centre have a health and safety policy?

- Yes. All organisations are required by law to have a safety statement and a health and safety policy.

#### Are staff vetted by the Gardaí and are references checked for all staff and volunteers?

- Identities and references are checked for all staff and volunteers.
- It is our legal obligation to Garda Vet (or international similar) all artists working with children and vulnerable people.
- All staff and volunteers are asked to sign a declaration stating that they are suitable to work with children and young people and that they will abide by the organisation's child protection policy.

Does West Cork Arts Centre have a policy for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers?

- Yes. Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers are part of the child protection policy.

## Parents Co-operation

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

- ✓ Bring and collect children on time for the activities. Staff at West Cork Arts Centre are not responsible for children outside of programme hours. Check the printed programme for details of times, activity and facilitator.
- ✓ Complete registration /enrolment at reception and ensure that current contact details have been given to staff. IMPORTANT: If your child has any special needs, physical, dietary or medical, please inform staff on enrolment. For the safety of your children we must be informed of any behavioural, sensory or learning difficulties your child may have. Our Facilitators are professional artists and may not have appropriate training in care and support work.
- ✓ Deposit must be paid on enrolment and the full fee paid on first attendance. If you have enrolled your child on a course and for whatever reason they cannot attend, please inform us as soon as possible.
- ✓ Supply any snacks, food or drinks that might be required.
- ✓ Check with staff regards wearing appropriate clothing for the activity (eg.dance, messy activity).
- ✓ We may encourage older children to access our programme through the websites [www.westcorkartscentre.com](http://www.westcorkartscentre.com) and if age appropriate social networks, however we do not encourage children or young people to contact adult members of staff via social networking sites unless it is through the appropriately designed channels. We ask parents to supervise internet use.
- ✓ West Cork Arts Centre has a photographer in residence. Your consent will be sought regards this.
- ✓ Take good care of your personal possessions. West Cork Arts Centre cannot be held responsible for loss or theft

Parents are responsible for their children's welfare at all times and West Cork Arts Centre will do its utmost to ensure the children are safe and well cared for, but the overall responsibility lies with the parent or carer.

### **Staff Members**

Ann Davoren - Director

Justine Foster – Programme Manager: Education and Community, CP Designated Person

Stephen Canty – Operations Manager

Luisa McCarthy - Project Assistant

Sarah Canty – Finance Officer

#### Front of House Team

Louise Buckingham – Administration & PR Assistant

Kevin O’Farrell - Administration Assistant & Photographer

Jackie O’Callaghan - Administration Assistant

Sylwia Migdal – Admin Assistant

Claire Lambert – Front of House (trainee)

CP Deputy Designated Person: Aisling Roche, Board of Management

### **Site Facilities**

Galleries, café, art workspace, three artists’ studios, performance and lecture room, reception and offices. Toilets are available for service users only. We are fully accessible for wheelchair users, lift to all five levels and facilitate hearing aid loop.

The building is fitted with CCTV

### **Booking**

All enrolment/bookings can be dealt with through reception via telephone, email or calling in:

**Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre**, Skibbereen, Co. Cork.

t. 028-22090

e. [info@westcorkartscentre.com](mailto:info@westcorkartscentre.com)

w. [www.westcorkartscentre.com](http://www.westcorkartscentre.com)

**Reception Opening hours:** Monday to Saturday 10:00am – 4:45pm

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information.**