



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

We at Leinster Open Sea are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children who are participating in our events.

Our aim is to create a safe, creative and enjoyable environment where children of all abilities can engage with the activities and where their protection and welfare is paramount.

To realise this aim, we will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Health and Children.

See the full Child Safeguarding Statement on our website

We operate a code of good practice for all our staff members, volunteers, and leaders working with children.

This child protection policy and related procedures and practice are reviewed at regular intervals, at least once every two years.

LOS will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of staff members, leaders and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for members and volunteers through supervision, support and training; reporting concerns to statutory agencies who need to know and involving parents/guardians and children appropriately.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with staff members, volunteers, and leaders.
- Ensuring general safety procedures are adhered to.

Issues to be aware of:

In the present climate of child protection awareness more and more groups need to be able to stand over the choices they make for their activity programme. LOS will always ask the following questions before they hire any staff, volunteer or leader.

- Have you have attended a child protection course?

- Can you supply at least two references from places where you have recently worked?
- Will you be happy to sign a declaration form to say you know of no reason why you should not work with children?
- Are you willing to go through the Garda Vetting process through the Garda Vetting unit if required for your role?

Lost Children Policy

As this is a family friendly event, a child protection policy will be issued to all staff. It is assumed that there is potential for lost children throughout the event. Lost Children will be taken to the first aid point and parents will be directed there when their child is lost. It is important to note that no general announcements will be made in the majority of lost children's cases. Only in the case where a child has not been found in a reasonably practicable timeframe will the situation be escalated.

Note: Children must never be accompanied alone – you must find another team member to accompany you.

Code of Behaviour for Staff, Volunteers and leaders.

- Treat all young people as individuals, equally and with respect, regardless of gender, age, religion, and ethnicity.
- Involve the children where appropriate in decision making.
- Offer constructive age-appropriate criticism, encouragement and praise.
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere.
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space.
- Never spend time alone with children. If meeting with children individually do so as openly as possible.
- Do not use or allow the use of offensive or sexually suggestive physical or verbal language to go unchallenged.
- Do not single out an individual child for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus of attention.
- Do not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form. However, there may be unavoidable such as providing comfort or reassurance to a distressed child. In all cases physical contact should only take place with the consent of the child.
- Do not physically chastise children or young people.
- Do not socialise inappropriately with children or young people outside of structured organisational activities.
- Do not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Do not allow allegations a child makes go without being recorded and addressed.

Reporting incidents

- LOS has an Incident Reporting Form and a Reporting Policy in place.
- LOS has a Child Officer to deal with any issues or concerns to a child's welfare and safety at events
- Should you have a concern for any child at an event with speak to the LOS officials and/or the LOS designated person.
- Be aware that a HSE social worker may want to talk to you to hear your direct observations or what the child said to you.

Do's and Don'ts of dealing with Disclosure:

It may happen that a child might make a disclosure to you, should this happen:

- Stay Calm.
- Listen to the child rather than question them directly. Don't ask leading questions.
- Offer them reassurance and take them seriously.
- NEVER PROMISE TO KEEP A SECRET.
- Explain (age appropriately) that you will have to tell a designated person and who that is if you know.
- In all cases record the concern in writing for yourself as soon as possible and in as much factual accuracy as you can. Leave out any assumptions or conclusions on your own part. Record what was said, or what happened, when and where it occurred, who was present and what action was taken.

Confidentiality:

- Information will be passed on a need-to-know basis
- Giving such info to others for the protection of a child is not breach of confidentiality
- Confidentiality re a disclosure cannot be promised to a child.

Photos:

- Never take photographs without permission, be aware that some children are not permitted to be photographed.
- Photos clearly identifying a child, or children should not be used without the permission of the parents.
- Printed Photo's should never appear with the full name of the children included.
- Where possible take pictures which do not leave a child identifiable form the picture.

Recruitment:

All Committee Members are asked fill out a Garda Vetting form to have their name cleared by Gardaí through the Central Garda Vetting Unit. They will also be requested to complete Safeguarding training as per guidelines from the NGB.

Allegations against Staff:

- In the event of a formal allegation being made against a member of LOS full co-operation will be given to the authorities.
- The Designated Person within LOS will deal with any issues to do with the child or Volunteers, or leaders.
- If the allegation is against the Designated Person, NGB Tuisla or An Garda can be contacted.
- The staff member will be informed of the allegation and the nature of the allegation.
- They will be given an opportunity to respond.
- Should a Garda investigation follow, LOS will remove the staff member's name from the LOS programme for the duration of the investigation and until the investigation is over.

Health and Safety concerning Children:

- Never leave children unsupervised.
- Provide a Safe environment.
- In case of an accident follow the policies and procedures in place. Let a responsible adult from the group take over.
- Make a written record of any incidents for yourself with the time date and nature of the incident and response and give a copy to LOS. designated person (use an incident report form which the designated LOS person will supply)
- Be aware of Emergency procedures in place and should there be an emergency remember all such incidents require a calm response from all adults present.
- In the case of a child being injured or unwell at a LOS event, please notify the Club Child officer/Safety Officer immediately and they will follow protocol. Depending on the seriousness of the illness/accident the designated person will notify First Aid and Event control if they deem it necessary.

Club Child Officer:

Elena Green

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