

# THE B!G iDEA

## The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Policy

### Document Control Sheet

<b>Name of Document</b>	Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedure
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## 1. Introduction

The Big Idea House (The B!G Idea) is a transformative non-profit that empowers young people to creatively tackle personal, local, and global challenges. This initiative equips students aged 15-19 with essential 21st-century skills through

hybrid workshops facilitated by educators that promote creative thinking and problem-solving, supported by industry mentorship via an EdTech platform. Recognised for its innovative approach, The Big Idea House offers these programmes across Ireland, fully funded to ensure accessibility for all schools, significantly impacting Ireland's educational landscape and fostering a new generation of changemakers.

The Big Idea House is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and discriminatory abuse and neglect. The Big Idea House accepts that in all matters concerning children, the welfare and protection of such children is paramount. It is considered of the utmost importance that we are fully compliant with all relevant safeguarding guidance and legislation.

The Big Idea House team and board recognises the rights of young people in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 by incorporating the principles of the UNCRC in our core values and throughout this document. The main principles of the UNCRC fundamental to this document are:

- that all the rights guaranteed by the UNCRC must be available to all children without discrimination of any kind (Article 2)
- that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3)
- that children's rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled with an environment where they can grow and reach their potential (Article 4)
- that every child has the right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- that the child's view must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her (Article 12)
- that every child is properly cared for and protected from harm or mistreatment (Article 19)

that children should be protected from all forms of exploitation (Articles 34 and 36) (taken from Children's Rights Alliance website, 2017)

The Big Idea House comes into contact with children when delivering the following educational programmes.

- The B!G Idea Transition Year Programme – Showcase & Accelerator
- The B!G Idea LCA Programme – Showcase & Accelerator
- The B!G Idea Youthreach Programme – Showcase & Accelerator
- The B!G Idea Northern Ireland Programme – Showcase & Accelerator
- Online delivery of workshops through schools – contact made with a teacher who is physically present.

For all of the above programmes, a teacher or educator facilitates programmes and engages in activities with students or learners. Following the programmes, a

select number of students/learners alongside their teacher/educator are invited to onsite workshops at a partner venue.

In accordance with the requirements of the [Children First Act 2015](#), Section 6 - [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#) and Túsla's '[Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#)', The Big Idea House has prepared a Child Safeguarding Policy as set out below. This policy and procedure underpins The Big Idea House commitment to the protection and welfare of children and young people.

A teacher, facilitator, team member or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

## **1.1 Policy Scope**

The Big Idea House has developed education programmes (outlined above) delivered by teachers and facilitators through Schools, Youthreach centres and Community Training centres. We host linked events in partner companies that connect second level school students, industry professionals and partners. The Big Idea House is a “provider” of “relevant services” as set out in Section 8 and Schedule 1 ( 5.a and b.) of the [Children First Act 2015](#).

This Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers.

## **1.2 Definitions**

Please see [Appendix 2](#) for the definitions of terms used in this policy.

## **1.3 Aims**

- To clarify the responsibility of The Big Idea House in relation to the protection of children and young people
- To assist The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers in identifying and reporting child abuse/neglect
- To safeguard The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers when engaging with children and young people

## **1.4 Review**

This Child Safeguarding Policy will be regularly reviewed and updated annually taking into account such items as; feedback received, changing legislation; and changes resulting from risk assessment. The Big Idea House Child Protection

Policy and Procedures will be made available to all workers, employees, contractors and volunteers and are available on The Big Idea House website.

## **2. Guiding Principles**

The Big Idea House shall observe this set of guiding principles in keeping children safe from harm while availing of our services. We believe that;

- The welfare, safety and rights of children availing of The Big Idea House services are paramount. The Big Idea House safeguarding guiding principles and procedures reflect national policy and legislation.
- During The Big Idea House workshops or accelerators, workers, employees, contractors and volunteers will act with integrity, behave ethically and inspire young people.
- During The Big Idea House workshops or accelerator events, teachers must remain present at all times.
- The Big Idea House programmes and events for young people are designed to be an enjoyable experience.
- In partnering with schools, Accredited Training Centres and other educational entities or individuals to deliver its education services, The Big Idea House will only engage with those who demonstrate good governance in safeguarding children.

## **3. Key Roles in safeguarding**

### **3.1 Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

[Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#) recommends that all organisations providing services to children should have a designated person to act as a liaison with outside organisations.

The DLP is responsible for leading the development of The Big Idea House Guiding Principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice. This will be done through liaison with all key workers who have relevant roles and responsibilities.

Best practice requires that The Big Idea House undertakes the following:

- Appointing at least one person as a DLP
- Appointing a Deputy DLP
- Ensuring that the DLP/Deputy DLP is accessible.
- Ensuring that the DLP/Deputy DLP is knowledgeable about child safeguarding and has undertaken any training considered necessary.
- Ensuring that the DLP/Deputy DLP is aware of their responsibility for making sure that the reporting procedure within The Big Idea House is followed in the event of a child welfare concern.
- See [Appendix 3](#) for Roles and Responsibilities of DLP/Deputy DLP

The DLP is the person to contact if there is an issue or concern about any aspect of a child or young person's protection and welfare. It is the responsibility of the DLP to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the DLP to liaise with Túsla or An Garda Síochána where appropriate. The DLP can be contacted at:

Kim Mackenzie-Doyle, The Big Idea House, Rathvinden, Leighlinbridge, Carlow  
Ph: +353 87 797 7024 Email: kim@thebigidea.ie

### **3.2 Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

The Big Idea House has appointed a Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Where the DLP is not available, then the Deputy DLP should be contacted. Siobhan Blaney, The Big Idea House, Rathvinden, Leighlinbridge, Carlow  
Ph: +353 83 009 7174 Email: siobhan@thebigidea.ie

### **3.3 Relevant Person**

As The Big Idea House is a provider of a 'relevant service', the organisation is required to appoint a 'relevant person'. For members of the public who wish to access The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures; they are required to contact the 'relevant person'. The Big Idea House the 'relevant person' is the DLP.

## **4. Raising Awareness about Child Abuse**

### **4.1 What is Child Abuse?**

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes the child harm. Because children can be abused in a number of ways, sometimes at the same time, it is very important for The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers to be aware of, or sensitive to these indicators. See [Appendix 4](#) for the categories of child abuse.

### **4.2 How to recognise Child Abuse?**

The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse:

- a) considering the possibility
- b) looking out for signs of abuse

- c) recording of information

### **Considering the possibility**

The possibility of child abuse should be considered for example, if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered or if the child seems distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. The possibility of child abuse should also be considered if the child displays unusual or fearful responses to teachers/parents/carers.

### **Looking out for signs of abuse**

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. They can exist in the relationship between children and teachers/parents/carers or between children and other family members/other persons. A cluster or pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed and sometimes make direct disclosures. Disclosures should always be believed.

### **Reasonable Grounds for Concern**

- a specific indication from the child that he or she was abused;
- an account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way;
- an injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. However, these suspicions should be recorded as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for Túsla or An Garda Síochána.

## **4.3 What to do if the above signs arise?**

When a The Big Idea House worker, employee, contractor or volunteer has a child welfare concern, they have a duty to contact The Big Idea House Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as soon as practicable.

Under no circumstances should a The Big Idea House worker employee, contractor or volunteer) attempt to deal with a welfare issue alone. And matters of such nature should not be discussed with any other individual than the DLP.

## **5. Reporting Child Welfare Concerns Procedure**

As outlined all workers, employees, contractors, and volunteers have a duty to contact The Big Idea House Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as soon as practicable in the event of a child welfare concern arising. The DLP is responsible for assessing, reporting and liaising with Túsla/An Garda Síochána on behalf of The Big Idea House.

### **5.1 Receiving a Disclosure**

If you receive a disclosure of harm from a child/young person, you may feel reluctant to report this for a number of reasons. You are required to inform the DLP of any instance of disclosure. The information contained in a disclosure may be critical to Túsla's assessment of risk to a child, either now or in the future. You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child/young person seriously
- Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible in as much detail as possible for the purposes of reporting to the DLP
- Treat the information confidentially
- Report this information as soon as possible to The Big Idea House DLP

#### **Concern about a potential risk to Children**

A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should be communicated to The Big Idea House DLP and in turn it will be reported to Túsla.



Any and all child welfare concerns should be discussed with The Big Idea House DLP.

## **6. How to ensure good Child Safeguarding Practices while fulfilling The Big Idea House activities**

### **6.1 Risk Assessment Strategy**

A child safeguarding risk management strategy is a structured approach to managing risks associated with child protection. The strategy outlines how risk is managed, including who is responsible for the process and a description of the process itself. The process includes risk assessment, implementation of controls, and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Managing risk typically involves the following steps and considerations

1. Identification of child safeguarding risks
2. Identification of any existing risk mitigation measures or internal controls.
3. Assess and rate The Big Idea House child safeguarding risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of the risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
4. If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk.
5. If there is still a high risk – the event should be cancelled.

In planning, arranging and managing an Education Programme or event, risks to child welfare shall be identified and actions taken to reduce or remove these risks shall be documented. The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers shall assess;

- events by taking into account the nature of each type of environment (i.e. classroom, partner premises, venue)
- the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations e.g. corporate or government partners)
- the characteristics e.g. age group and needs of all children/juveniles expected to be present in that environment.

#### **6.1.1 Potential Risks and Mitigations**

The Big Idea House is committed to reviewing this risk assessment on an annual basis..

An assessment of potential risks to children participating in The Big Idea House programmes was carried out. Below is a list of identified risks and the measures we have in place to mitigate them:

Risk Identified	Procedure in Place to Manage Identified Risk
Child is harmed by The Big Idea House staff member, The Big Idea House mentor or other person, while availing of our services or services supported by The Big Idea House.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All The Big Idea House staff and mentors involved in the delivery of the programmes and events will be briefed on the Child Safeguarding Policy.</li> <li>- No one on one interaction without supervision between students and The Big Idea House staff, mentors or partners.</li> <li>- The Big Idea House has appointed a Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate briefing and information is provided to staff members regarding The Big Idea House's Child Safeguarding Policy.</li> <li>- At events directly managed by The Big Idea House, will have oversight of the content to ensure it is appropriate.</li> </ul>
Unsupervised interaction between mentors and young people	No one-on-one interactions without supervision by a teacher at events. The Big Idea House mentor at events will have received a link to The Big Idea House Child safety policy. Mentors will be briefed on best practice ahead of all events.
Online engagement (e.g., virtual mentoring, social media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safe online policies, monitored interactions, no private messaging outside programme platforms.</li> <li>- The Big Idea House will have oversight of the content to ensure it is appropriate.</li> <li>- All digital mentorship content from mentors will be sent directly to teachers before reaching students.</li> </ul>
Events and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervised spaces, clear event safety guidelines, first-aid provision.</li> <li>- The Big Idea House staff and mentors involved in the delivery of the programmes and events will be briefed on the Child Safeguarding Statement.</li> <li>- No one-on-one interaction without supervision between students and The Big Idea House staff, mentors or partners.</li> <li>- The Big Idea House has appointed a Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate briefing and information is provided to staff members regarding The Big Idea House Safeguarding Statement.</li> <li>- At events directly managed by The Big Idea House, The Big Idea House will have oversight of the content to ensure it is appropriate.</li> </ul>
Reporting concerns	Clear reporting structure, designated safeguarding officers, training on recognising signs of harm
Digital content (e.g.,	- The Big Idea House obtains parental consent to take

photo/video use)	<p>photographs and/or video footage of students who are under 18. Individual or group photographs/or video footage of students is not permitted in the absence of this consent being obtained. Where a student's photograph or footage of a student is taken, students will be identified by their full name or, if students are named alongside their school name, only their first name is provided externally.</p> <p>- Clear signs will be placed in areas where filming or photographs are taking place, notifying persons in the area of this fact.</p>
Child goes missing at an in-person event	<p>If a child is missing or found at an event managed by The Big Idea House, the person who made the discovery should inform The Big Idea House team lead and the relevant school/centre lead.</p>
Digital correspondence	<p>Queries and email correspondence from our website are linked to general email within The Big Idea House team <a href="mailto:hello@thebigidea.ie">hello@thebigidea.ie</a> or <a href="mailto:teachers@thebigidea.ie">teachers@thebigidea.ie</a>. If a student reaches out via email a standard reply is formulated to request the student to engage their teacher/guardian to contact The Big Idea House on their behalf. Where a general query is received from a student, links to relevant websites may be sent from the general email by a member of The Big Idea House team.</p>
School / Centre Visits	<p>- All The Big Idea House staff and The Big Idea House mentors attending a school must be accompanied by a teacher or other person assigned by the school to supervise the class at all times and should not allow themselves to be left unattended with children.</p> <p>- All The Big Idea House staff and The Big Idea House volunteers are asked to consider The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Statement and relevant Department of Education guidance to ensure all information and materials shared are appropriate for the intended audience.</p>
Field Trip Visits	<p>- The Big Idea House will require any partner hosting an event with students participating in the programme to comply with the provisions of the Children First Act 2015 and ensure all parties involved are briefed on The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Statement and policies.</p> <p>- Students must be accompanied by a teacher or other person assigned by the school to supervise during the field trip.</p> <p>- All information and materials shared must be appropriate for the intended audience.</p>
A child discloses to The Big Idea House staff member or The Big Idea House mentor that they are being harmed by	<p>- If any disclosures of harm are made to The Big Idea House staff member or mentor they should contact the Designated Liaison Person as a matter of urgency to seek advice on any necessary steps to take.</p>

persons either within or outside The Big Idea House and this disclosure is not appropriately reported to the Designated Liaison Person or Tusla.	- Who the Designated Liaison Person is must be clearly communicated to all staff members in The Big Idea House and any mentor or other person working with or on behalf of The Big Idea House.
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The Big Idea House considers the likelihood of any of the risks set out above occurring to be low in light of the policies and procedures it has in place.

## 6.2 Examples of Risk Management Measures

- Induction and training for all relevant staff and volunteers – See paragraph [8 below](#)
- Assist staff in identifying inappropriate behaviour – see [Appendix 1](#)
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for risks to child welfare
- Supervision or monitoring of activities
- Garda Vetting – see [paragraph 7](#) below.

## 7. Recruitment/Garda Vetting

S.10 of the [Children First Act 2015](#) (enacted December 2017) states; ‘a provider of a relevant service shall ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service’. S. 11 of this Act stipulates that procedures must be in place for the ‘selection or recruitment of any person as a member of staff of the provider with regard to that person’s suitability to work with children’.

The [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Acts 2012](#) to 2016 (enacted April 2016) placed vetting procedures under a legislative footing, and now makes it mandatory for persons working with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted. Thus, The Big Idea House Safeguarding Policy and Procedure is applied in conjunction with The Big Idea House Garda Vetting Policy and Procedure.

### 7.1 New Recruits

The Big Idea House shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that suitable individuals are recruited to work (as workers, contractors, employees or volunteers) with children and young people in accordance with this policy and

procedure, which include; consent of Garda vetting, induction and training on The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

## **7.2 Permanent /Contract Staff**

Not all The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors or volunteers will be working with young people. Workers, Contractors, employees, and/or volunteers may be required to work with children outside of the school environment at workshops and/or accelerators in the following programmes:

- The B!G Idea Transition Year Programme
- The B!G Idea LCA Programme
- The B!G Idea Youthreach Programme
- The B!G Idea Northern Ireland Programme

People working on these programmes or other programmes where there is possible young people shall be re-vetted on a rolling basis i.e. every 3 years.

## **7.3 The Big Idea House Recruitment Policy for Employees and Contractors**

Exclusions from working in The Big Idea House in which young people are involved would include:

- Any child-related convictions;
- Insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
- Concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;

## **7.4 Volunteers/Members from another agency/organisation**

Staff/volunteers from another agency or organisation that have contact with children/young people during the course of their work with The Big Idea House in schools will be required to confirm in writing that they currently comply with the relevant legislation and guidelines i.e. have been Garda vetted and undertaken appropriate child safeguarding training.

# **8. Training**

## **8.1 Induction**

All workers, employees, contractors and volunteers commencing with The Big Idea House will receive induction training on The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, including “promoting good practice with young people” see [Appendix 1](#). Confirmation by signature that they have read and

understood The Big Idea House Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure will be required.

## **8.2 Tusla Training Module**

On its website Túsła has provided a training module, 'Introduction to Children First eLearning Programme'.

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>. This is a module of training that all workers, employees, contractors and volunteers working with young people are required to complete.

## **8.3 Child Safeguarding Refresher Training**

Workers, employees, contractors and volunteers whose duties bring them into contact with children will receive refresher training in the area of child safeguarding as consistent with their role in The Big Idea House.

# **9. Management of Allegations Procedure**

The priority of this procedure is to:

- (a) protect the child/young person;
- (b) safeguard The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers against malicious or unfounded complaints;
- (c) ensure that The Big Idea House workers, employees, contractors and volunteers, are provided with due process/access to their rights of natural justice where a complaint is made.

## **9.1 Persons to be Notified**

When an allegation of abuse is received, the procedure for reporting child welfare concerns shall be followed.

In addition:

- The CEO shall be alerted to the allegation by the DLP;
- The Big Idea House management shall ensure no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk; any initial protective measures taken to safeguard the welfare of the child/young person do not presume guilt.
- Parents /guardians or person in 'locus parentis' shall be informed of any action planned while having regard to the confidentiality rights of others, such as the person against whom the allegation has been made.

## 9.2 Investigation of a Complaint

In the context of an allegation of abuse against a worker, employee, contractor or volunteer, an investigation will be conducted in a thorough and expeditious manner. This investigation will ensure the respondent's full access to the rules of natural justice and shall follow strict procedures to ensure that confidentiality is employed throughout.

Steps

1. A complaint can come to the attention of the organisation in a number of different ways:
  - a. Contact, by phone or in person, with a worker, employees, contractor or volunteer, or by letter, email and or text.
  - b. The complaint may be made by the person directly affected or by a person acting on their behalf.
2. When a complaint is received the manager is informed immediately, every effort will be made to address the issue informally before moving to a formal procedure.
3. Formal Procedure: An external, independent, investigator will be appointed to investigate the complaint. This investigation will ensure the respondents have full access to the rules of natural justice and shall follow strict procedures to ensure that confidentiality is employed throughout.

The Director with responsibility for Human Resources will determine the appropriate course of action following receipt of the findings of the investigation, which may include review of the findings under the auspices of The Big Idea House Disciplinary procedure.

The Big Idea House shall ensure that actions taken by the organisation do not frustrate or undermine any investigations or assessments that may be undertaken by Túsla or An Garda Síochána.

The requirements of fair procedures and natural justice mean that Túsla will not usually share the details of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a worker until the worker has had an opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions.

All persons involved in a child safeguarding process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, The Big Idea House staff) shall be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

## 9.3 Confidentiality

Every effort shall be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person up to date with the progress of the case, information will be restricted to those who require the appropriate knowledge in

order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, and manage related investigations or disciplinary or suitability processes. To ensure that happens;

- All parties will be advised of the need for confidentiality
- Breaches of confidentiality as outlined in The Big Idea House contracts

will be handled in line with The Big Idea House Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## **9.4 Factors Considered in Taking Protective Measures**

When an allegation is received, the following issues shall be considered when deciding whether a worker, employee, contractor or volunteer should remain in their current position, or moved to another or be suspended;

- the nature and seriousness of the allegation(s);
- the vulnerability of the children/young people the worker, employee, contractor or volunteer would be in contact with at work;
- the nature of the position occupied by the worker, employee, contractor or volunteer;
- the level of supervision available for the worker, employee, contractor or volunteer;
- the availability of support for the worker, employee, contractor or volunteer;
- other possible risks to the investigation.

## **9.5 At the Conclusion of an Investigation**

At the conclusion of an investigation, a finding should be made in relation to the allegation and an appropriate decision made with regard to next steps. A review of the investigation should then be conducted to ensure that all relevant risk issues have been considered. This might include looking at environmental factors and work practices that result in a situation of unsupervised access to children by workers. This information will provide The Big Idea House with an opportunity to put in place measures to minimise any further risk of harm to children in its care while also ensuring the safeguarding of workers, employees, contractors and volunteers in the carrying out of their duties/activities in the workplace.

Such measures may include;

- Excluded from working on programmes, workshops, and accelerators with children.
- Disciplinary procedures to be followed.
- Additional training to be undertaken.

## **9.6 Malicious Complaints**

If it is found that a malicious complaint has been made by a member of the public, the case will be referred to the relevant authorities. If such a complaint is made by a staff member, The Big Idea House disciplinary process will be invoked.



# Appendix 1 Promoting Good Practice with Young People

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets). Avoid one-to-one scenarios.
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making learning fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and vetting procedures in education.
- Being a good role model – includes moderating one's own behaviour in the company of children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children – and not pushing them against their will.
- Ensuring that the teacher remains present at all times during the workshop, both inside the classroom and outdoors.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

## Practice to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies.

- Taking a child in your car.
- If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the workshop or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital.

## Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Avoid spending any amount of time alone with children away from others.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. \*\*
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Administer any form of physical punishment or discipline except by way of necessary restraint.

\*\* NB. It may sometimes be necessary for workers, employees, contractors or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or vulnerable. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of teachers and the person involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and the class teacher, (this is critically important, as it ensures that another adult is made aware of the incident) and record the incident and report to the DLP. You should ensure the teacher of the child is informed.

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## Appendix 2 - Definitions

CHILD – under the Child Care Act 1999 a child is defined as ‘a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married’.

PROVIDER - The Children First Act 2015 (s.8) defines a ‘provider’ as “a person— (a) who provides a relevant service, and (b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service— (i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service, (ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or (iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service”.

RELEVANT SERVICES -

Schedule 1 [Extract], Children First Act 2015

5. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of—

- a. educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children,
- b. care or supervision of children, or
- c. formal consultation with, or formal participation by, a child in respect of matters that affect his or her life, whether or not for commercial or any other consideration.

## **Appendix 3 – Roles and Responsibilities of The Big Idea House DLP/Deputy DLP**

- Be fully familiar with The Big Idea House duties in relation to the safeguarding of children
- Have a good knowledge of The Big Idea House guiding principles and child protection procedures
- Ensure that The Big Idea House reporting procedure is followed, so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Túsla
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from workers, employees, contractors and volunteers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Túsla exist
- Consult informally with a Túsla Social Worker if necessary
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Túsla on behalf of The Big Idea House.
- Inform the child's parents/ guardians/teacher that a report is to be submitted to Túsla or An Garda Síochána, unless:
  - Informing the parents/guardians/teacher is likely to endanger the child or young person;
  - Informing the parents/guardians/teacher may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family/teacher;
  - The family's /teachers' knowledge of the report could impair Túsla's ability to carry out an assessment
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to their attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns
- Provide feedback to the trainer, as appropriate
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records
- Act as liaison with Túsla and An Garda Síochána, as appropriate

Information obtained by Agency or other persons pursuant to Act

As per s17 of the Act subsection 1– information shall not be disclosed to a third party, except when necessary in accordance with law or under and in accordance with an authorisation under subsection 2 of the Act. Failing to comply with non-disclosure requirement is an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a class A fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or both.

## **Appendix 4 - Categories of Child Abuse**

### **(Children First National Guidance)**

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, it should be considered a child welfare and protection issue for both children, and child protection procedures should be followed for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the teacher/parent/carer.

The definitions of neglect and abuse presented here are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

#### **(i) Neglect**

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally.

It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.

Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period

of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

## **(ii) Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver.

Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child

- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk-taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

### **(iii) Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, maybe, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The [Children First Act 2015](#) includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal

proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

#### **(iv) Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings /friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
  - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
  - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
  - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and



protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

Possible indicators of this type of abuse:

- age inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour
- inappropriate seductive behaviour
- hints about sexual activity

## **(v) Bullying**

It is recognised that bullying affects the lives of an increasing number of children and can be the cause of genuine concerns about a child's welfare. Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name-calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices. While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable. These include: children with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children and those perceived to be LGBT; and children of minority religious faiths.

There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying among children with special educational needs. This is particularly so among those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some children with complex needs may lack an understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such children may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour.