



# Child Safeguarding Statement & Policy

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**Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Lullymore, Rathangan, Co. Kildare R51 V293**  
**T: 045860133      E: [bogs@ipcc.ie](mailto:bogs@ipcc.ie)      W: [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie)**

# Background

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council with the aim of ensuring, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the educational services we provide is safe from 'harm' (as defined in the Children First Act 2015). The Irish Peatland Conservation Council qualifies as a 'relevant organisation' under the Children First Act 2015, Schedule 1, Section 2 Relevant Services, Part 5 (a) which states 'Any work or activity which consists of the provision of – (a) educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children'. The provision of this Child Safeguarding Statement is a legal requirement under the Children First Act 2015 as IPCC is a provider of a relevant service.

The practices and procedures laid out in this Child Safeguarding Statement are supplementary to, and should be read in conjunction with the *Children First Act 2015* (see <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>) and the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* (see <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20171002ChildrenFirst2017.pdf>).

**The Children First Act 2015** places a number of statutory obligations on specific groups of professionals and on particular organisations providing services to children. Some people have specific legal responsibilities under the Act. These include people who: are **Mandated Persons**, and/or work in an organisation which is a "**Relevant Service**".

**The Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017** is a national policy document based on legislation, to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm and abuse. It was published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

## 1. Name of the Service Being Offered

Irish Peatland Conservation Council Education Programme

### 2.1 Nature of the Service

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council's mission is to conserve a representative sample of the peatlands of Ireland for people to enjoy now and in the future. We own and manage the Bog of Allen Nature Centre in Co. Kildare which comprises nature gardens and habitats and a museum together with five peatland reserves in Counties Kildare, Meath, Kerry and Waterford which are managed for nature conservation.

A key part of our work is the provision of awareness, educational and field studies programmes for primary and post primary students. Our services include in house programmes delivered by our Education Officer from the Bog of Allen Nature Centre and on nearby Lodge Bog and outreach work where the Education Officer visits various schools around the country to deliver educational programmes as part of the Heritage in Schools Scheme and the Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland Workshops. In addition our Conservation Management staff may work with young people to undertake management activities on our nature reserves as part of a volunteering or work experience programme.

The in-house education and awareness programme has four elements:

A: field studies of a peatland habitat where children visit a peatland nature reserve owned by the IPCC (Lodge Bog) to undertake a variety of experiments and explorations on the habitat. During the site visit they work from educational decking and gain access along board walks to the site.

B: field studies at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre where children explore and interpret indoor and outdoor exhibits focusing on the natural environment

C: We also welcome young people to the centre from School Transition Years on work experience or volunteering to assist with nature conservation management activities such as scrub removal, drain blocking, bird and butterfly surveys and water table monitoring in peatland habitats.

D: IPCC staff and volunteers engage with young people in the context of their families at various open days held at our properties in Kildare, Kerry, Meath and Waterford for example during Heritage Week, Biodiversity Week, International Bog Day.

The outreach programme mainly consists of classroom based workshops but may also include a visit to a locally based peatland/nature site to undertake various field studies.

## 2.2 Locations

IPCC's services are provided to children in the following locations

- On the IPCC premises at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre, in the museum and gardens or in a bog habitat at Lodge Bog or Lullymore West Bog in Co. Kildare
- \* On an IPCC nature reserve at Girley Bog, Co. Meath, Fenor Bog, Co. Waterford or Coad Bog, Co. Kerry
- In their own school grounds or classroom anywhere in the country
- On a nature reserve site that is the property of another agency or individual

## 2.3 Service Users

IPCC's education programme works principally with Primary School and Secondary School students who book our educational programmes. School groups book a particular programme of study from our service are accompanied by their class teachers and parent volunteers so that the ratio of adult to child is 1:10. We also work with parents and children at public events held on our nature reserves or in other locations where our outreach services are engaged.

## 2.4 IPCC Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

IPCC's overarching commitment is to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

The following principles underpin our Child Safeguarding Statement:

- \* The welfare and best interests of children are of paramount importance. The IPCC is committed to respecting the right to dignity and bodily integrity of every child and to protecting those rights in line with the core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as articulated in Articles 2, 3 and 6.
- \* All IPCC staff members have a responsibility to protect children and therefore have a duty to report child abuse as set out in the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).
- \* The IPCC fully accepts and endorses the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and maintains up-to-date child protection policies in line with these instruments and policies.
- \* The IPCC will not knowingly engage with any person, organisation or fund any project that poses a risk to children or that does not meet the child protection and safeguards outlined in the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).
- \* The IPCC upholds and is guided by the principles of the UNCRC and, in this regard, is committed to ensuring that all children with whom staff members have contact are treated equally and that all children have a right to voice their opinion in matters affecting them (Articles 2, 12 and 13).

- \* The IPCC ensures that staff receives the appropriate training in child protection and welfare.
- \* IPCC recruitment policy adheres to best practice and the IPCC ensures that all staff are vetted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU).
- \* Volunteers working with children and young people will be vetted by the GCVU or will work alongside an IPCC member of staff who has been vetted by the GCVU.
- \* Anyone contracted on a consultancy basis to work on projects that involve contact with children will be vetted by the GCVU or will work alongside an IPCC member of staff who has been vetted by the GCVU.

### 3. Risk Assessment

IPCC have undertaken a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of the educational services that we provide. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

No.	Risk Identified	Level of Risk	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1	An independent adult traveller visiting the Bog of Allen Nature Centre uses the toilets at the same time as children participating in an education programme at the Centre	M	When a school group is on centre, a teacher or guardian will be asked to accompany children to the toilets. Visitors will be advised to use the staff toilets which are in a different location in the centre.
2	Delivery of IPCC events involving children by a staff member alone	M	Ensure that two IPCC personnel (staff member and volunteer) are present at all time during events involving children
3	Incident of inappropriate behaviour by a staff member	L	Staff members dealing with children must be garda vetted, take child protection training and declare in writing that they will adhere to the IPCC code of practice when on IPCC premises, in a school or visiting another site.
4	Photographing children while participating in an education programme or event with the IPCC	L	Seek written permission from parents or teachers accompanying children to photograph them or to use photographs in IPCC promotions (see Appendix 4). Children must never be named in photographs.
5	Use of technology by children or an IPCC staff member or volunteer to record photographs or film of children during an IPCC educational programme and uploading these images to the internet	M	Inform groups prior to their visit that photography is not permitted. Ensure staff and volunteers are aware that such activity is forbidden.
6	Inadequate supervision of children	M	When making a booking, schools are required to confirm that 'the class teacher will be present at all times and that the IPCC Staff member will not be left alone at any time with the pupils.' Mandatory adult/child ratios outlined in the Child Protection Policy must be adhered to by all staff.



## 4. Procedures for Safeguarding Children and Reporting

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017). In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service.

### General Procedures for Safeguarding Children

The principles and procedures to be observed by the IPCC to ensure as far as practicable, that a child, while availing of our service, is safe are outlined below. These are for all Education staff and volunteers in the IPCC who come into contact with children during the course of their work. IPCC promotes a child-centred culture in our organisation.

- The child's welfare and safety will always be put first.
- Education staff and volunteers will ensure, to the best of their ability, that every child remains safe and experiences IPCC's education service positively.
- Management will provide, and the Education staff and volunteers will participate in recognised and appropriate Child Protection Training.
- \* All staff will be provided with a copy of this Child Safety Statement.
- Education staff and volunteers will apply the practice and procedures as outlined in their training.
- All young people will be treated with dignity and respect.
- All Education staff and volunteers will give children enthusiastic and constructive feedback.
- All Education staff will complete the Introduction to Children First on line learning module co-ordinated by Tusla - the Child and Family Protection Agency and will maintain valid certificates.
- All Education staff and volunteers will agree to Garda vetting.

In addition, all staff and volunteers will:

- Never use any form of corporal punishment against a child.
- Not take any body measurements of a child.
- Not exert undue influence over a child in order to gain personal benefit or reward.
- Not indulge in any inappropriate touching of a child.
- Not engage in rough contact with a child, or in sexually provocative games or language.
- Not undertake any form of therapy (such as hypnosis) with a child.
- Not engage in a sexual activity with a child or young adult.
- Never photograph or film a child participating in an IPCC educational programme or event without the written consent of a teacher or parent
- Never be alone with a child in any situation, activity or for any purpose whatsoever.
- Never single out individual children or young people for excessive attention such as favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus of attention.
- Not socialize inappropriately with children or young people outside of structured activities.

A breach of any of the above could give rise to both disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

### Reporting Alleged/Suspected Abuse

As a relevant organisation the Irish Peatland Conservation Council recognises that everybody has a responsibility to report child welfare concerns. These may include:

- Evidence of an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way (see additional information in Appendix 2).
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse (see additional information in Appendix 2).
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect (see additional information in Appendix 2).

- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused
- An admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed

An Irish Peatland Conservation Council staff member or volunteer that has a child protection or welfare concern can report that concern to the Designated Liaison Person. The Irish Peatland Conservation Council have designated:

Ms Nuala Madigan, CEO as the Designated Liaison Person

The following procedures apply to all IPCC staff members who engage in work involving contact with children or to whom allegations or suspicions of child abuse are made. These procedures are also appropriate in the case of anonymous reports, or reports from adults who experienced childhood abuse. The same procedures also apply in relation to reporting allegations of abuse made against an IPCC employee, volunteer or intern. The steps in Tables 1 and 2 must be adhered to by the IPCC staff member reporting an allegation or disclosure of abuse. These steps apply to a disclosure made in person, in writing (post or email) or by telephone.

If the Irish Peatland Conservation Council's Designated Liaison Person decides not to proceed and make a report to Tusla the individual making the report will be advised that under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, if they remain concerned, they are free to report the concern to Tusla or An Garda Síochána and that they will not be penalised should they do so. If this should occur the Irish Peatland Conservation Council will follow the recommendations from the Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children document and give the person who made the report to the Designated Liaison Person a clear, written explanation as to why the decision was made not to report to Tusla.

**Table 1: Steps for Reporting an Allegation or Disclosure of Abuse**

Staff are obliged to report any allegation, concern, suspicion or disclosure of abuse or neglect
Staff members will not guarantee confidentiality to anyone alleging, reporting or disclosing abuse or neglect, unless by doing so, it exposes a child or puts a child at risk of harm
IPCC staff will guarantee that professional confidentiality is maintained at all times and that identifying information shared with statutory agencies is done so in confidence.
Any allegation, concern, suspicion or disclosure of abuse or neglect is reported to the Designated Liaison Person (Chief Executive) or in their absence to the Deputy Designated Liaison Person
The contact details of the Designated Liaison Person may be given to the person alleging or disclosing abuse if they request it.
The Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person will determine whether it is appropriate or not to make a formal report. In such a case, the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person may discuss their concerns with the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency located in the area where the child lives (see contact details in Appendix 3) in advance of making a formal report.
Notes are taken using the Child Protection Reporting Form (Appendix 1) detailing as much information as possible.
The notes are emailed to the Designated Liaison Person, who must be informed immediately of the concern.
The Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person reports to the appropriate Tusla Child and Family Agency Office (see contact details in Appendix 3) by telephone and by email using the Child Protection Reporting Form (see Appendix 1).
A request is made of the appropriate Tusla contact to send an email to the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person acknowledging receipt of the report.
The Designated Liaison Person will identify if any follow-up reporting is necessary.



<b>Table 2: Steps for Reporting an Allegation or Disclosure of Abuse Outside of Office Hours</b>
If an allegation or disclosure is made to an IPCC staff member outside of normal office hours, or outside of the IPCC offices, then it is the responsibility of the individual to contact the Designated Liaison Person immediately. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person may be contacted if the Designated Liaison Person is not available
If a report is made outside of office hours, and Tusla Children and Family Services cannot be contacted, the Designated Liaison Person or delegated staff member will contact An Garda Síochána (see contact details in Appendix 3).
If the Designated Liaison Person cannot be contacted, then that individual must assess the risk (for example, if it seems that a child is facing an immediate risk) and make an immediate referral to the Tusla Children and Family Services or (if a report is made outside of office hours) to An Garda Síochána (see contact details in Appendix 3).
Follow-up contact with Tusla Children and Family Services the next working day.

### **Reporting Alleged/Suspected Abuse by an Employee/Volunteer/Intern**

In the case of an allegation of abuse by an employee, volunteer or intern, the Designated Liaison Person (on receiving the complaint) will immediately ensure that no child is or continues to be exposed to unnecessary risk. The Designated Liaison Person will then seek advice from Tusla who will then:

- inform the individual that an allegation has been made against them;
- explain to the employee the details of the allegation;
- tell the employee whether or not a report has been made to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency;
- give the employee copies of any written records relating to the allegation;
- offer the employee an opportunity to respond to the allegation within a specific time frame; and
- forward the employee's response to the Tusla Child and Family Agency (if appropriate).

If an allegation is made against the Designated Liaison Person, then the Chair of the Board, or a person that he or she nominates, will carry out the above steps.

### **Safe Recruitment**

The following procedures are observed by the IPCC when engaging paid staff or long-term volunteers to work with children as part of their job description:

- \* Prospective positions within the IPCC are advertised widely.
- \* Advertised positions include a job/role description and person specification, detailing attributes identified as being associated with the position.
- \* Ideally, interviews are undertaken by at least three representatives of the organisation who are suitably qualified and/or have proven experience to undertake such interviews.
- \* At least two verbally confirmed references are required.
- \* Successful applicants are required to consent to undergo Garda vetting on commencing employment by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU).
- \* Employment contracts are written so as to include an employment probationary period.
- \* Newly employed staff members are required to agree to the terms and conditions of employment, as well as all codes and policies of the IPCC

## **Training and Supports**

- The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring that All IPCC staff, interns and volunteers and Board members receive induction training in the child protection policy and procedures including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- IPCC is responsible for ensuring that the ongoing training needs of staff, interns and volunteers and Board members in the area of child protection and welfare are fully addressed.
- All training and guideline documents will be regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate and all staff, interns and volunteers will be informed of these updates.
- IPCC recruitment policy adheres to best practice and the IPCC ensures that all staff are vetted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU).
- Interns working with children and young people will be vetted by the GCVU or will work alongside an IPCC member of staff who has been vetted by the GCVU.
- Anyone contracted on a consultancy basis to work on projects that involve contact with children will be vetted by the GCVU or will work alongside an IPCC member of staff who has been vetted by the GCVU.

## **Designated Liaison Person(s)**

IPCC have appointed Ms Nuala Madigan, CEO as the Designated Liaison Person and as the relevant person (specified under the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.

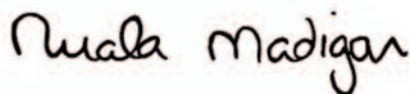
## **Implementing and reviewing child safeguarding procedures in IPCC**

This IPCC Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed if there has been a material change in any of the issues to which it refers. Records will be kept of the changes made and copies of previous Statements will be kept on file. This will be a priority of the Designated Liaison Person (Ms Nuala Madigan, IPCC CEO). See further information in section 5 of this document.

## **5. Implementation**

IPCC recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement was approved by the IPCC Committee of Management on the 13th March 2018 and will be reviewed after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:



Designated Liaison Person/Chief Executive Officer

For queries, please contact: Ms Nuala Madigan, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Lullymore, Rathangan, Co. Kildare R51 V293, Tel: 045-860133

# Appendix 1: Child Protection and Welfare Report Form

## APPENDIX 2 – Indicators of Abuse

**Physical Abuse** is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from willful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

### Physical Indicators

- Scratches
- Bite marks or welts
- Bruises in difficult places (behind ears, groin, etc)
- Burns, especially cigarette burns
- Untreated injuries

### Behavioural Indicators

- Self-mutilation tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Undue fear of adults
- Fearful watchfulness

**Emotional Abuse** is normally found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child. It occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

### Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorders
- Wetting or soiling
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Frequent vomiting

### Behavioural Indicators

- Rocking, thumb sucking
- Fear of change
- Chronic runaway
- Poor peer relationships

**Neglect** is where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety.

### Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger
- Exposed to danger; lack of supervision
- Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated illness

### Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Low self esteem
- Compulsive stealing or begging

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal.

#### Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in genital or anal areas
- Itching in genital area
- Stained or bloody underwear
- Stomach pains or headaches
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks
- Anorexia or bulimia

#### Behavioural Indicators

- Chronic depression
- Inappropriate language or sexual knowledge for age group
- Making sexual advances to adults or other children
- Low self esteem
- Afraid of dark
- Wariness of being approached by anyone
- Substance or drug abuse

Source: Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

## **APPENDIX 3 – Contact Information for Reporting**

### **Tusla**

See contact information overleaf.

### **Garda**

If contact cannot be made with Tusla and the child is considered to be in immediate danger the Irish Peatland Conservation Council will make contact with the Gardaí in Kildare Town. Contact details:

Kildare Town Garda Station, Dublin Road, Kildare Town, Co. Kildare. Telephone: (045) 527 730

To report a child protection and welfare concern for a child considered in immediate danger who lives outside the Kildare area to the Gardaí contact details for the relevant Garda Station can be accessed by visiting <https://www.garda.ie/en/Contact-Us/Station-Directory/>



## Appendix 4: IPCC Parental Consent Form

Name of Child / Young Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Child / Young Person \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth of Child / Young Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number (parents or guardians) for Child/Young Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (tick as appropriate):  Male  Female

Other Relevant Information (Please mention any medical conditions, allergies, special needs or dietary requirements): \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick one of the following boxes:

I give permission for the young person named above to attend:

\_\_\_\_\_ (event name)

organised by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council.

On their own

With a friend  Name of Friend \_\_\_\_\_

With an Organisation  Name of Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to allow the young person named above to attend \_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_. I understand that there will be suitable supervision for the event and that

those attending will not be allowed to leave the premises during the event. I understand that the

proceedings may be photographed/filmed and that this may be used for promotional purposes

without disclosing the names of those included in a photograph.

Signed (Parent / Guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Child / Young Person): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_