



Julianstown Youth Orchestra (JYO) – Child Protection Policy

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Introduction

The Julianstown Youth Orchestra (JYO) is committed to protecting the safety and welfare of all children and young people who participate in any way in its activities.

JYO will endeavour to raise awareness amongst volunteers of the issues involved. There is an onus on everyone to report suspicions or concerns. It is important for individuals to be familiar with the definitions of abuse and to be equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and to know how to take a concern or an incident forward.

It is important that all volunteers involved in JYO understand, accept and abide by this child/young person protection policy.

Key Elements of JYO Child Protection Policy

The Julianstown Youth Orchestra works with children/young people in what we hope is a safe and friendly environment. Today it is important for the sake of the children/young people to have a child protection policy in place.

Our Child Protection Policy comprises of:

1. A statement of policy, which expresses our commitment to provide a safe environment for any child and young person with whom JYO interacts;
2. An undertaking to apply this policy throughout the organisation;
3. Detailed procedures and steps to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is implemented across all areas of the Julianstown Youth Orchestra.
4. A commitment to review the policy every two years.

Supporting the Child Protection Policy Statement, the JYO has formulated detailed policies and procedures covering:

- Code of Behaviour for all volunteers
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse;
- Confidentiality;
- Recruiting or selecting volunteers;
- Managing and supervising volunteers;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by volunteers;
- Complaints and comments;
- Incidents and Accidents.

Section 1: Child Protection Policy Statement

We the Julianstown Youth Orchestra are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. 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. We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff;
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse;
- Confidentiality;
- Recruiting and selecting staff ;
- Managing and supervising staff;
- Involvement of primary carers;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff;
- Complaints and comments;
- Incidents and accidents.

This Policy will be reviewed in May 2018

Signed -----
Designated Person

Signed -----
Deputy Designated

SECTION 2 - Code of behaviour for Volunteers

A code of behaviour for volunteers is an essential element of this organisation's Child Protection Policy. This policy will help to create a supportive environment for staff to provide a child - centred approach for children and young people. This involves five principal areas:

- Child centred approach
- Good practice
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Physical contact
- Health and safety

Child Centred Approach

- Treat all children equally;
- Listen to and respect children and young people;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise;
- Use appropriate language (physical or verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers;
- Use age appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

Good Practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures and keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;

- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures;
- Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and be aware of anti-bullying policy;
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review existing policies and procedures regularly;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure clear communication between children/young people and the JYO organisation; Have guidelines on a sheet for children/young people;
- Do not be passive in relation to concerns, i.e. Don't 'do nothing';
- Do not let a problem get out of control;
- Volunteers should avoid taking a session on their own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers;
- Avoid giving lifts to children/young people without the consent of the child's / young person's primary carer unless absolutely necessary;
- Maintain awareness around language used and comments made. If you think that something you have said may cause offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/ young people;
- Do not use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language;
- Do not single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- Do not allow/engage inappropriate touching of any form;
- Do not hit or physically chastise children/young people;
- Do not socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

Physical contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in emergency or a dangerous situation)
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touching;
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

Health and safety

- Do not leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedures and follow accordingly;

SECTION 3 - Reporting procedures

· JYO will appoint a Designated Person and a Deputy Designated Person to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare within the organisation. They will respond to any concerns that may be identified. A deputy needs to be appointed to cover this role when the Designated Person is unavailable or if he or she is directly involved in an incident, suspicion or accusation.

· Designated Persons should be comfortable dealing with the topic of child protection and welfare;

· Professional development and network support should be provided for the Designated Person and his/her deputy;

· It should be very clear to all volunteers, primary carers and children/young people who has been designated to deal with child protection issues and how to contact him/her.

Recording Procedures

The Julianstown Youth Orchestra has a system and mechanism in place for recording concerns about the protection of children and young people. It involves using an incident book where records are kept. These records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained.

Volunteers should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

- Suspicions
- Concerns
- Worrying observations
- Behavioural changes
- Actions and outcomes

Dealing with a Disclosure

· Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him/her enough time to say what he/she needs to say;

· Do not use leading questions to prompt details;

· Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret;

· Do not make the child /young person repeat the details unnecessarily;

· Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (Explanation should be age appropriate).

Reporting procedures

- The Julianstown Youth Orchestra has developed very clear reporting procedures for matters relating to a child/young person's safety and welfare.
- The reporting procedures should be known and accessible to all staff and volunteers;
- The person whom expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed;
- Actions and outcomes should be noted;
- Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts in the incident notebook. Information should be factual only. Any opinions should be supported by facts;
- Inform the Designated Person, or his/her deputy if unavailable;
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at risk;
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement);
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, Designated Person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive. Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;
- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly; *In case of emergencies outside of the Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.*

SECTION 4 - Confidentiality statement

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

SECTION 5 - Recruiting and selecting Volunteers

Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that volunteers are carefully selected and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every volunteer (paid or voluntary);
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
- Some of the exclusions would include:
 - a) any child-related conviction;
 - b) insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
 - c) concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- All volunteers will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought.

SECTION 6 - Managing and supervising Volunteers

New volunteers should be made aware of policies and procedures. Music teachers and visiting conductors should agree to abide by the organisations Child Protection Policy Statement.

Staff/Volunteers management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary), children and young people, we undertake that:

New staff/volunteers will:

- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures and role of individual designated to deal with issues of concern;

All staff/volunteers will:

- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;

SECTION 7 - Involvement of primary carers

Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy;
- Issue contact /consent forms where relevant;
- Comply with health and safety practices;

- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines;
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate;
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s) where appropriate.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person;
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk;
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a volunteer/member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first.

To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
- Have a designated person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

SECTION 8 Dealing with allegations against Volunteers/staff

In the event of allegations being made against a volunteer/employee, the protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration.

The JYO has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and volunteer/employee. The same person must not have responsibility for dealing with the child/young person welfare issues and the staff employment issues.

An allegation against a volunteer/employee should be assessed promptly and carefully. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a formal report to the Health Service Executive should be made. The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. The JYO Committee will maintain a close liaison with the Health Service Executive and the Gardaí. Employers should ensure that their actions do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by the Health Service Executive and the Gardaí.

Agreed procedures should be followed in the context of the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice. The JYO Committee should take protective measures appropriate to the level of risk while not unreasonably penalising the volunteer/employee – unless necessary to protect the child/young person. Protective measures might mean increased supervision, assignment to different duties, or suspension. We may want to seek advice on procedures or protocol to deal with allegations against volunteer/staff.

Procedures

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Ursula Murphy will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Paula Brooks will deal with issues related to the staff member.

- *The first priority is to ensure that no child/young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;*
- *If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted;*

· *The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and the child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age appropriate manner;*

- *The volunteer/employee will be informed as soon as possible:*

a) of the nature of the allegation;

b) the volunteer/employee should be given an opportunity to respond;

- *The chairperson of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;*
- *Any action following an allegation of abuse against a volunteer/employee should be taken in consultation with the Health Service and the Gardaí;*
- *After consultation, the JYO should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.*

SECTION 9 Complaints and comment procedures

In the event of complaints and comments:

- Complaints and comments will be responded to as soon as possible.
- The JYO Committee has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person.
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

SECTION 10 Accident procedures

- The JYO must contain an up-the-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved within the organisation;
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;

- External organisations with whom the JYO has dealings with must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;

- First-aid boxes should be available and regularly re-stocked;

- The location of the first-aid boxes must be made known to staff;

- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the Health and Safety guidelines.

The location of accident/incident book must be made known to volunteers/employees;

- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material;

- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off- site trips.

APPENDIX 1 Definitions of abuse

There are four main categories of abuse as outline by *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.

The JYO adopt the definitions of abuse from the above named *document Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.

APPENDIX 2 Contact Details for Social Workers in the Meath Area.

Child and Family Agency
Duty Social Work Department
25 Brews Hill
Navan
Co. Meath
Phone 046 9030616 046 9030608
Office Hours 9am - 5pm

APPENDIX 3 – JYO Designated Persons:

Ursula Murphy has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person 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 Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive of Gardaí where appropriate.

Designated person: Ursula Murphy
Tel: 087 6838728

Deputy Designated person: Paula Brooks
Tel: 086 2565947

The following excerpt from 'Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2 -pg 38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern.

1. Specific indication from the child or young person that he/she has been abused;
2. An account by a person who saw the child/ young person being abused;
3. Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
4. An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that may be a case of abuse (an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour).
5. Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

APPENDIX 4 - FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

In case of Emergency or outside Health Service Executive office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Principal Social Worker
or Duty Social Worker : _____

1. Details of Child:

Name: _____ Male: Female:

Address: _____

Age/D.O.B.: _____

School: _____

Name of Mother:

Name of Father:

Address of Mother if different to Child:

Address of Father if different to Child:

Telephone Number:

Telephone Number:

Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

Household Composition:

Name:

Relationship to Child:

Date of Birth:

Additional Information e.g.

School/Occupation:

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: _____

Age:

Male:

Female:

Address:

Relationship to Child: _____ Occupation: _____

4 Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: _____

School: _____
Public Health Nurse: _____
Gardaí: _____
G.P.: _____ Hospital: _____
Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club: _____
Other, specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs: _____
Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Y N
Are the Parents/Legal Guardians supportive? Yes No .

5 Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of Confidentiality)

Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family: _____

6 Details of Person completing form: Name: _____
Date: _____ Occupation: _____
Signed: _____

Guidance notes: The Health Service Executive has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. The Health Service Executive therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection. This reporting form is for use by:

- *Health Service Executive Personnel.*
- *Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the Health Service Executive.*
 - *Designated person in a voluntary or community agency.*
 - *Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.*

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Service Executive personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report. The Health Service Executive aims to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- *A Court could order that information be disclosed.*
- *Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.*

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998. If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her. (Local arrangements to be inserted.)