



ENABLE IRELAND

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. NAME OF SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

Enable Ireland is a national organisation providing supports for children and young persons with disability and their families. Enable Ireland recognises the additional needs and vulnerabilities of children and young people with disabilities and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

Enable Ireland is compliant with the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people and providing a safe environment for them when engaging in our services. We recognise the right of children to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them.

Enable Ireland will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by having a clear written policy and procedure to support staff to recognise, respond and report concerns about child protection and welfare. This applies to all children and young people under 18 years of age.

2. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

We will seek to safeguard children in the following ways:

We do this in relation to Staff Volunteers and Students by:

- Having robust recruitment practices ensuring all required Garda/Police vetting, professional registration, and reference checks are made.
- Delivering a training programme for all staff to provide a shared understanding of child protection issues to inform planning and practice, including mandatory child protection training. We will prioritise keeping children first training up to date.
- Providing regular supervision and support for all staff, volunteers and students who are in contact with children.
- Having clearly defined roles for all staff within the organisation including those that are mandated to report under Children First.
- Nominating a Designated Liaison Person who will support all staff through any stage of the safeguarding process with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Having clear protocols for recording and storing information on child protection and welfare concerns.
- Ensure all staff /volunteers/students complete the mandatory HSE eLearning module 'An Introduction to Children First', and attend additional training as appropriate to their role.

We do this in relation to children/ young people and Parents/Guardians by:

- Providing information for families about child protection and good practice throughout their time with our service.
- Supporting children who have difficulty communicating concerns.
- Having clear guidelines for staff around communication with parents, regarding specific concerns relating to their child. The safety and well-being of the child must always take priority
- Having a clear written protocol available and displayed in all centres with list of Designated Liaison Persons and Deputy DLPs contact details. This information is also available via the link in the Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

We do this in relation to working with other Agencies by:

- Sharing information and concerns with Tusla and other relevant agencies and providing assistance, as required.
- Ensuring clear protocols are in place for all staff, where services are delivered in partnership with other agencies

3. RISK ASSESSMENT	
<p>In accordance with the <i>Children First Act 2015</i>, the Board of Management/Service Provider has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the service or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:</p>	
Risk Identified	Policies and/or Procedures in place to manage Risk
<p><u>Clarification of the Role of the Designated Liaison Person and the Mandated person:</u></p> <p>The 2017 Guidelines state: “While mandated persons have statutory obligations to report mandated concerns, they may make them jointly with another person, whether the other person is a mandated person or not. In effect, this means that a mandated person can make a joint report with a designated person”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Enable Ireland <i>Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2022</i> clarified that Mandated Persons can consult with the DLP, however “the legal obligation rests with the Mandated Person and not with the DLP”. It should be noted that in some instances the Mandated person may also be a DLP. • Lists of DLPs and Mandated persons are clear • Induction training is rolled out to all new staff and includes a training presentation delivered locally of information on the Enable Ireland Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children and site-specific information regarding the reporting procedure. All staff are required to also complete the HSEland Child Protection training which is refreshed every three years.
<p><u>Possible failure by staff to recognise abuse:</u></p> <p>Thresholds re risk and what constitutes as a child protection concern can vary by individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing training to be provided in recognising child welfare / protection concerns, to staff both nationally & locally. • Child welfare will be a rolling agenda item at team meetings. • Support and supervision structures in place and should include discussion on protection and welfare • Opportunities for discussion re attitudes, self-awareness / reflection need to be built into supervision, training, team meetings etc.
<p><u>Language & Communication:</u></p> <p>Significant number of service users for whom English is not their first language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring access to interpreter services as required.
<p><u>Recording of Concerns:</u></p> <p>Possible lack of confidence by staff in documenting impact of concerns on child welfare. i.e. DNA’s (not attending appointments). Recording of decision making process must be clear.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support for staff will be provided regarding the recording of concerns as part of training in the area.

<p><u>Communicating with Parents & Guardians:</u> Lack of parental knowledge of what constitutes a cause for concern</p> <p>The process for discussing a concern with parents/guardians before reporting and the circumstances in which this is not advised, as it may further endanger the child or the person making the report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all parents are given information on Enable Ireland’s Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children • Ongoing support for staff will be required regarding process for communicating effectively with parents and guardians.
<p><u>Liaison with staff in Enable Ireland Special Schools:</u></p> <p><i>The Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2022</i> defines the overlapping structure where a child attends both school and service. Protocols and coordination have been developed involving clear communication between the school and service DLP’s.</p>	<p>The Protocol (s.14.0) states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘If a staff member of Enable Ireland, based in a service that is co-located with a special school, becomes aware of suspected, alleged or disclosed child abuse he/she must follow Enable Ireland’s reporting procedure. The staff member should inform the relevant Enable Ireland DLP’. • ‘If the concern is not related to the school, the Enable Ireland DLP should inform the school’s DLP (usually the Principal) that a concern has arisen in relation to the child but it is not necessary to share the nature or details of the concern in all cases; The schools DLP must have a bona fide need to know’.
<p><u>Inter-agency Structures:</u> Overlapping structure where a child attends joint agency service e.g. Child Disability Network Team (Progressing Disabilities Services (PDS)). For PDS the lead agency policy is followed in consultation with employer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to work with partner agencies to ensure clarity for all stakeholders and clear guidelines for staff in dealing with concerns on child welfare.
<p>Keeping children & young people safe from online harm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable Ireland acknowledges the central role of the internet in all of our lives and the responsibility to support children and young people to keep safe from harm online. Children should be supported and encouraged to develop safe and responsible online behaviours. Enable will work in partnership with families and other agencies to support and develop safe and responsible online behaviours.

4. CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As by the *Children First Act 2015* and *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place:

- Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- Pathways of Service Delivery for Children and Families Code of Practice
- Information Management Policy
- Service User/Owner Confidentiality Policy
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Protocol for the Application of Trust in Care Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Codes of Standards and Behaviour Policy
- Lone Workers Policy
- Guidelines for Working Together Effectively Personal Assistants/ Support Workers/Home Support Workers/ Family Support Workers/ Link Workers and Service Users (Children's Services)
- Policy on Dealing with Bullying Incidents Relating to Service Users/Service Owners
- Supervision and Support Policy & Procedure
- Complaints Policy
- Day Trips & Overnight Stays Policy
- Accident/Incident Reporting, Analysis and Investigation Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Responding to Service Users that Self-Harm Policy & Procedure
- Policy and Guidelines for Providing Positive Services and Supports in Response to Behaviours that Challenge
- Services Division Risk Management Policy & Procedure
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Use of Restraints in Designated Centres Policy & Procedure
- National Training and Development Policy

Note 1:

The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. All policies and procedures listed are available on request.

Note 2:

- All staff are required to complete the HSE eLearning module – *Introduction to Children First*.
- *Staff have access to regular Supervision and Support in line with the service policy.*

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- We recognise that implementation and review are an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children and young people safe from harm while availing of our service.
- This Statement will be reviewed every 2 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
- This statement is published on the service website and is displayed in the service. It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with the service. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

Signed: 

Date: 02.06.2022

For further information on this Statement, contact Relevant Person:

Ms Mary Fox,
National Director of Services,
Enable Ireland,
Email: nationaldirector@enableireland.ie

Note: There is a current list of Designated Liaison Persons and Deputies available to all staff in Enable Ireland via the link in the Protocol for the Protection and Welfare of Children.