



Child Safeguarding Statement

Name of Service:

Mermaid Arts Centre, Civic Centre, Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Nature of Service:

Mermaid Arts Centre opened in 2002. It is a leading space where ideas, creativity, imagination and artistic expression find a natural home. We make and present excellent cultural experiences which delight, engage and inspire. While our vision reflects a wide range of interests our key role is as a place for people to gather and our success as a local centre in Wicklow for creative enterprise ensures our appeal to national and international artists and visitors.

Mermaid Arts Centre is committed to a child-centred approach in our work with children and young people. It is central to the philosophy of Mermaid Arts Centre that children are unconditionally respected and kept safe from harm while using our services.

Principles to safeguard children from harm:

Below are Mermaid Arts Centre's principles and procedures which should be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while availing of our services both within our building and off-site.

- All Mermaid staff and regular artists & facilitators with contact to children, young people and vulnerable persons are Garda vetted.
- All Mermaid staff have undertaken Tusla online Child Protection Training – Children First E-Learning.
- All child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.
- Children are always accompanied by a parent/guardian, teacher or member of Mermaid staff while in the venue.
- A child in need of personal support because of illness, physical needs or any form of distress, shall be referred in the first place to his/her parent/guardian or teacher. In the absence of a guardian, the staff member who is working with or supervising that activity will provide such support. A parent/guardian or teacher should inform a member of staff if there are any specific needs required during a child's participation at Mermaid event.

Risk Assessment:

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Please see list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1 Non-compliance with Mermaid Arts Centre Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement	All staff are provided with the Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement. Any breach of the Child Protection Policy will be reported to the relevant line manager.
2 Delay in making referrals to Tusla	All staff are trained and supported to ensure they can act promptly and not delay in contacting the Designated Liaison Person DLP who will report directly to Tusla when they deem a referral may be required.
3 Receipt of complaints of alleged child abuse where a member of Mermaid is the alleged perpetrator.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated person/DLP and they will report directly to Tusla. Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee.
4 Receipt of complaint of alleged child abuse where a parent, guardian or teacher is the alleged perpetrator.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated person/DLP who will report directly to Tusla when they deem a referral is required. The school will be notified.
5 Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person/DLP or directly to Tusla.
6 A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person/DLP or directly to Tusla.

Procedures

Mermaid Arts Centre Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the *Children First Act 2015*, and the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers by a child availing of our services
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers to work with children
- Procedure for provision of, and access to, child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla or the Gardaí as appropriate
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are 'Mandated Persons' as defined under the Children First Act 2015
- Procedure for appointing a Mandated Person/Designated Liaison Person.

Implementation

Mermaid Arts Centre recognises 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.