

Child Protection Policy

At **PACS** we are committed, to a practice that protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues, which cause children and young people harm. We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:–

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Child Protection Policy

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Statement of Intent

It is the policy of **Performing Arts Club of St Johns (PACS)** to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse whether physical, emotional and sexual harm.

Our organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable, safe and secure whilst engaged in any of Performing Arts Programmes, training events or workshops.

Personnel should, at all times, show respect and understanding for an individual's rights, safety and welfare, by conducting themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of the **Performing Arts Club of St Johns (PACS)**.

Guidelines for all Staff and Volunteers

ATTITUDES

Members of our Staff, and volunteers should be committed to treating children and young people with respect and dignity by:-

- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying
- Valuing each child and young person, and respecting their individuality
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- Encouraging and praising each child or young person

BY EXAMPLE

Staff and volunteers should always set an example which others can follow by:-

Using appropriate language with children and young people and challenging any inappropriate language used by a young person, child or adult working with young people.

Respecting a young person's right to privacy

ONE TO ONE CONTACT

Staff and volunteers should:-

- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts, if necessary request a second person be present at that meeting.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Staff and volunteers should never:-

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, **PACS** staff should seek out the leader of the youth organisation to deal with such an incident.
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

GENERAL

Staff and volunteers should:-

- Be aware that at any time someone could misinterpret an action no matter how well intentioned that action was.
- Never draw any conclusions about anyone else without checking the facts.
- Never allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes.
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make any suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to, a child or young person, even in fun.

RELATIONSHIPS

Staff and volunteers who are involved in relationships with other members of staff or volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within **PACS** or the work that **PACS** does.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE WITH, CHILDREN, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In **PACS** every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is therefore the responsibility of the management to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

Children and young people

Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could make their life safer and better for them.

PACS will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.

When sharing information, **PACS** personnel will be sensitive to the correct level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

Parents

Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

We will achieve this by:-

Publicising information on all our primary, post-primary, youth and parenting work, making available, on request, the names of our Designated Child Protection Person(s) and the details of how to make a complaint.

And finally by publishing a full copy of this Child Protection Policy on our internet site www.pacs07.com

Staff & Volunteers

As an organisation, that offers support and guidance to children and young people, it is imperative that each member of the **PACS** staff is aware of their responsibilities under Child Protection legislation and has a working knowledge of **PACS's** procedures.

Other Bodies

A copy of our Child Protection Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body where required.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CONCERNS WITH AGENCIES WHO NEED TO KNOW AND INVOLVING PARENTS AND CHILDREN APPROPRIATELY

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in PACS has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

- Name of child or young person
- Age
- Home Address (if known)
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental Responsibility. Telephone numbers if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
- What has prompted the concerns?
Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- Has the child or young person been spoken to?
If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?
If so, record details
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. school, designated officer, social services etc
- Has anyone else been consulted?
If so, record details

ACTION TAKEN

REPORTING PROCEDURES (A)

Staff / volunteer has concerns

Record & Report to Designated Persons responsible for child protection On the PACS committee.

Is this a serious concern?

Yes/No or Possibly

Seek advice from designated officer of school / relevant organisation or Social Services

Report & Record

Yes/No

Identify training or practice issues from the Designated C.P. Officer of school relevant organisation / Social Services or Police.

Refer back to staff /volunteer and / or appropriate personnel

DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSONS

For reasons of confidentiality the only person(s) who need to know this information are the Designated Child Protection Persons within PACS

The Designated Person(s) will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident.

Useful Numbers

NSPCC Help line Tel: 0800 800 5000 – 24 hours, Freephone

Child Line Tel: 0800 1111 - Freephone

RECORD-KEEPING

- All records, information and confidential notes shall be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.
- Only the designated Persons will have access to these files.

TRAINING

In PACS the management take responsibility for the training needs of staff and volunteers. The individual, however, also plays a part in identifying areas in which they feel training is required. There are 3 set training periods per year.

ANNUAL APPRAISAL

There is an official annual appraisal system for each member of staff.

DISCLOSURE

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly. Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and ensure you take what the child says seriously.
- Allow the child to speak without interruption, Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question. Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
- Advise the child that you will try to offer support, but advise that child that you must pass the information on. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon after the event as possible, Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate them into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
- Contact one of the *PACS* Designated Persons for advice /guidance. The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- If either Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer / member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves.
- Ensure you Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

FOLLOWING CAREFULLY THE PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT & SELECTION OF STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

PACS operates employment and supervision procedures ensuring that the highest priority is given to issues relating to child protection and each new member of staff will be required to undergo a police check (CRB) as part of our recruitment policy.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERING THROUGH SUPERVISION, SUPPORT & TRAINING

PACS encourages the development of staff and volunteers through its on going support, supervision and training.

- **INDUCTION**
Each new member of staff or volunteer is made familiar with *PACS*'s policies and procedures including its Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour.
- **APPRAISALS**
Each new member of staff undergoes 1 month / 3 month and 6 month Appraisals.
- **MENTORING SCHEMES**
Each new member of staff is assigned to a mentor for the duration of 1 year. This provides the new member of staff with opportunities to voice concerns and anxieties or to ask questions about their work or the environment in which they are working.

