

Child Safeguarding Statement 2021

The **National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland**, in accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, has agreed this Child Safeguarding Statement as set out in this document. It is binding on all members of the Bahá'í community and those registered to work with under-18s in a range of roles including those of children's class teachers, junior youth animators and study circle coordinators who work on behalf of the organisation in a voluntary capacity.

The Bahá'í community, under the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly, aims to foster and develop qualities in children and young people, through the provision of children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles, in addition to all other community activities that will enable them to become aware of and realise the potential they have to be of service to humanity.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland recognises that child safeguarding, and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of the children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles provided, in addition to all other community activities, and must be reflected in all of its policies, procedures, practices and activities.

In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland, the members of the Bahá'í community and all those registered to work with under-18s as children's class teachers, junior youth animators, study circle tutors will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child safeguarding and welfare.

The organisation:

- recognises that the safeguarding and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- has the intention to be fully compliant with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- has the intention to fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child safeguarding and welfare matters;
- adopts safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect volunteers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- is developing a practice of openness and partnership with parents;
- encourages parental involvement in the education of their children, junior youth and youth;
- fully respects confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Risk Assessment

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland has carried out a written Risk Assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services and this Risk Assessment document gives the required policy, procedure or guidance to be followed to alleviate these risks. The Risk Assessment was carried out on 3rd July 2021.

Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, there are further procedures that support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services the details of which are given in The Child Safeguarding Policy of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland (Version 6.1).

These include:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against a child availing of our services by a person or persons providing that service;
- Procedures for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedures for the screening and training of those who will be registered to work with under-18s as children's class teachers, junior youth animators, study circle tutors and assistants
- Procedures for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- Procedures for registering all those who will work with under-18s
- Procedures for maintaining a list of those who are registered to work with under-18s

All procedures listed are available upon request.

Relevant People

- a. The Designated Liaison Person is Alison Wortley
- b. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Sandra Dillon Howes
- c. The mandated person for the Bahá'ís of Ireland is Finbar Loftus
- d. The Child Safeguarding Officer is Laura Walsh

Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our organisation 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 will be reviewed at the meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly in July 2022 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:



Date: 3 July 2021

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland (Chairman)

For queries on this statement, please contact Ann O'Sullivan, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland.

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