

Child Safeguarding Statement 2023

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 community life and activities, including the provision of children's classes, junior youth groups, study circles, activities at Feast and camps, 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 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 8 July 2023.

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 6.3).

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 2023 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:



Date: 8 July 2023

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.

Email: secretary.nsa@bahai.ie Phone: 01 6683150

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment 2023

Written Assessment of Risk of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, the following is the Written Assessment of Risk of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland.

It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of "harm" as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk.

"Child" or "children" refers to anyone under 18, and applies to those who are over 16, even when they are the registered volunteer in the activity, such as the teacher, animator or tutor.

1. List of organisation activities:

- Teaching of children
- Animating of junior youth groups
- Tutoring of study circles
- Supervision of children at the above three activities, at Feast, at Reflection Meetings and all other activities organised under the auspices of the Bahá'í Community
- Arrival and dismissal of children at classes, junior youth groups, study circles and other activities
- Recreation breaks for children
- Participation in outreach activities
- Outdoor activities
- Sporting activities
- Outings and service projects
- Camps and training events involving overnight stay
- Camps and training events involving foreign travel
- Use of private facilities for organisation activities
- Use of public facilities for organisation activities
- Transport arrangements including carpooling
- Care of children with additional needs (where possible)
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst children
- Administration of First Aid
- Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst children
- Training of those who are registered to work with under-18s in safeguarding and child protection matters
- Use of external visitors as part of delivering activities
- Care of children with specific vulnerabilities and/or needs
- Volunteers and parents involved in organisation activities
- Visitors/other adults present in facilities while activities are taking place
- Use of digital technologies by children
- Use of digital technologies by those working with under-18s
- Application of sanctions under organisation's Code of Conduct
- Use of video/photography/other media to record events

2. The organisation has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities:

- Risk of harm not being recognised by organisation personnel

- Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by organisation personnel
- Risk of child being harmed by another child while attending organisation activities
- Risk of child being harmed by a member of community or other external person while the child is participating in organisation activities
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while attending organisation activities
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between child and another child or adult
- Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while at organised activity
- Risk of harm to children with additional needs who have particular vulnerabilities
- Risk of harm due to inadequate application of the code of conduct
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, animating or tutoring situation
- Risk of harm caused by member of organisation communicating with children in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by member of organisation personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner


3. The organisation has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment:

- All members of the community who are registered to work with children are provided with a copy of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment and Child Protection Policy.
- All members who are registered to work with children are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015.
- There are clear procedures outlined in the policy to ensure those working with under-18s in a variety of roles, including that of teachers, animators and tutors are trained in the Child Safeguarding Policy of the National Spiritual Assembly.
- The organisation has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of activities held in private and public facilities.
- The organisation has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of residential events.
- The organisation adheres to the requirements of the Garda Vetting legislation and has clear procedures in place for the registration of volunteers to work with under-18s in a variety of roles including as teachers, animators, and tutors, including those coming from other jurisdictions.
- There are clear procedures in place for registering with the Registration Officer as an adult who wishes to work with under-18s in a variety of roles, including that of teacher, animator and tutor without which people may not work with children on behalf of the Bahá'í community.
- The organisation has clear policy and procedures in place to ensure the compliance of all its activities with the Children First Act 2015 and its own Child Safeguarding Policy.
- The organisation has a code of conduct in place for those registered to work with under-18s.
- The organisation has in place a code of conduct for children and for registered adults.
- The organisation has in place a procedure for sharing the code of conduct with parents.
- Parents are provided with a copy of the code of conduct and have access to the Child Safeguarding Statement and to the Child Safeguarding Policy on request.

- The organisation has in place disciplinary procedures for teachers, animators, tutors and assistants.
- The organisation has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid.
- The organisation has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external persons being brought in to deliver activities to children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles.
- The National Spiritual Assembly:
 1. Has provided each person registered to work with under-18s a copy of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 2. Has provided each member of the community and our collaborators from the wider community, registered to work with children, with a copy of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 3. Encourages all those registered to work with children to avail of relevant training
 4. Encourages NSA members to avail of relevant training
 5. Maintains records of community members and NSA member training

In undertaking this risk assessment, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this organisation and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage those risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the organisation has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the extent possible.

This risk assessment has been completed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland on 8 July 2023. It shall be reviewed as part of the organisation's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed: 

Date: 8 July 2023

Chairperson, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland

Signed: **Ann O'Sullivan**

Date: 8 July 2023

Secretary, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland