



**KILKENNY ARTS
FESTIVAL**

Child Protection Policy

July 2010

Kilkenny Arts Festival (KAF) Child Protection Policy Statement

KAF is committed to a child - centered approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/ young person is paramount. We adhere to the recommendations of Children first: National Guidelines for the protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Health and Children. We are committed to implementing the following policies and procedures:

- Code of Behaviour for all staff
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment
- Managing and supervision of staff
- Involvement of primary carers
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

The designated member of staff dealing with child protection is Lindsay Perry, Administrator/ programme co-ordinator.

This policy will be reviewed in Jan 2011

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Code of Behaviour For Staff

Child Centered approach

- All children and young people are to :
- Be treated equally
- Be treated with respect and
- Be listened to
- Be involved in decision making processes as appropriate
- Be encouraged and supported
- Engage in a fun learning process and experience.

Facilitators and Staff

All facilitators and staff working with young people on behalf of KAF are required to :

- Use appropriate language
- Lead by example
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Respect personal boundaries
- Discuss and establish ground rules for each activity with the group
- Be aware of childrens limitations and of any specific special needs / requirements
- Ensure that contact numbers for parents and or KAF staff are to hand
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation
- Manage a good code of behaviour for children/ young people by reporting any suspected or disclosed abuse by a staff member to designated KAF person.

Good practice

- Each unaccompanied child participating in an activity must be registered i.e name, address and phone number, any special needs or requirements should be noted.
- All staff must be made aware of KAF's child protection policy and procedures.
- Any concerns regarding children or young people must be reported to the designated member of staff.
- A minimum of two adults must be present when facilitating workshops.
- All artists are required to document and evaluate their work with children and young people. Where appropriate permission to take photographs must be secured.
- All artists are required to sign contracts with KAF outlining the terms and conditions of each project.
- A parental consent form must be completed for all junior volunteers.

Inappropriate behaviour

When adults are working with children and young people the following actions should never occur:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone.
- Use of offensive or sexually suggestive physical/ verbal language.
- Favouritism, ridicule, criticism.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Socialising inappropriately with children/ young people outside of structured activity time.
- Hitting or physical chastisement of children/young people.

Physical contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact. (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation)
- Avoid rough play or inappropriate touch.
- Check with children/ young people about their level of comfort if doing touch exercises.

Health and safety

- Do not leave children/young people unsupervised or unattended.
- Do not allow children to use any dangerous materials.
- Provide a safe environment.
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly. This is established through staff training.

KAF designated contact regarding child protection and welfare

Lindsay Perry has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young persons safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the designated person to liaise with the Health Services Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

Lindsay Perry can be contacted at the KAF offices on 056 776 3663.

Damian Downes has been designated as deputy to Lindsay Perry and can be contacted at KAF offices.

Valerie Ryan has been appointed as the Deputy to Damian Downes.

Recording and Reporting Procedures

All incidents are to be recorded in the 'incident book'. This book is kept in the KAF office in a safe place. When recording an incident staff should record:

- All details : date, time and people involved. Information should be factual and should outline the specific reasonable grounds for concern.
- The nature of the disclosure or concern recorded under the following headings; suspicions, concerns, worrying observations, behavioural changes, actions and outcomes.
- The administrator as designated person is to be informed of the incident. The CEO is also to be informed through Lindsay Perry.
- Any information shared is to be treated with the utmost confidentiality
- The Health Services Executive may be contacted for advice and consultation, prior to a report being filed and as soon as possible after an event has been reported

- If there are reasonable grounds for concern the designated person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the HSE and make a report without delay.
- In case of emergencies outside of HSE working hours the Gardaí will be contacted immediately.
- KAF's procedure for dealing with a disclosure is as follows;
 - 1) KAF's designated person is informed immediately of the disclosure and if not present at the scene, will make their way immediately to the scene.
 - 2) KAF's HSE contact is informed immediately of the disclosure and also the gardaí if deemed necessary.
 - 3) Any parents/ guardians of any persons who are minors, involved in the incident are immediately informed unless doing so would place the child/children or young person at risk from a parent/ guardian.
 - 4) If a KAF staff member is in breach of any aspect of this child protection policy, their access to children will be halted immediately pending the outcome of an investigation. The right of the child supersedes that of the employee in this case. This action is effective immediately upon any disclosure or incident.
 - 5) All persons who are under the age of 18. will remain in the company of the designated KAF person until such time that they are met with a parent/guardian.

Dealing with a disclosure

- How staff and/ or volunteers respond to a child or young person who discloses a concern;
 - 1.** Stay calm. **2.** Listen to what the child/ young person has to say. **3.** Give them time to explain the situation/ incident. **4.** Assure them of privacy. **5.** Assure them they were right to come forward and tell someone. **6. Do not promise to keep any secrets.** **7.** Ensure you will support them and tell them what is happening.

Relevant Contact Details

- Local HSE duty social worker
11 Patrick St. Kilkenny Tel; **(056) 7784781**
Ann Purcell Carlow; **(059) 9133747**
- Local Gardaí **(056) 7722222**

Confidentiality Statement

KAF is committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard a child or young person
- Giving such information to the Gardaí or a HSE child protection officer for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if information is being shared and/or a report made to the Health Services Executive, unless doing so could put the child at further risk
- As an arts organisation KAF documents its exhibitions, education and outreach activities. Images including children will not be used for publicity unless prior consent is received from parents or primary carers.
- Records of information on children and their guardians are kept in a safe and confidential file in the form of a password protected document accessible only by the designated KAF person, the deputy KAF person and the deputy's deputy.

Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement

KAF undertakes to ensure to the best of its ability that staff are carefully selected, trained (where necessary), and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for each job
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel
- Candidates will be required to submit an up to date c.v. and to sign contracts in the event of being offered a position.
- Candidates will be required to read and sign the child protection policy of KAF
- Candidates are asked to provide two written references that are recent, independent. All references will be verbally confirmed by KAF.
- Staff will be interviewed by a panel of at least two representatives
- No person deemed to constitute a risk will be employed
- All candidates to sign the KAF declaration form.
- All staff will be given a probationary period which will vary in length depending on the position.
- **Exclusions include :**
- Any child-related convictions.
- Refusal to sign an application form/ declaration form
- Insufficient documentary evidence of identification.
- Concealing information on one's suitability to working with children.
- All staff must agree to consent to Garda Vetting, and where available this will be sought.

Managing and Supervising Staff – Policy Statement

To protect staff and children/young people, we undertake that:

New Staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory training session.
- Be made aware of the organisations code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern.
- Undergo a probationary period to be agreed in line with the length of the programme/ activity.

All staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices.
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement.
- Be provided with child protection training.

Policy Statement on the involvement of primary carers

KAF is committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy
- Inform primary carers of all activities
- Issue contact/ consent forms where relevant
- Comply with health and safety practices
- Operate child centered policies in accordance with best practice
- Adhere to recruitment guidelines
- Ensure as far as possible that activities are age - appropriate

If KAF has concerns about the welfare of the child/ young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child / young person
- It is the responsibility of the designated persons to make contact with the primary carer without delay.
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these onto the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí.
- Have a designated person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young persons welfare.
- Signed parental consent forms will be required for all volunteers under the age of 18.
- A parental consent form will also be required for any unaccompanied audience members under the age of 18 that are taking part in a children's activity with KAF.

Procedure for dealing with an allegation against staff

In respect of an allegation Damian Downes will deal with issues relating to any issues relating to KAF staff members.

Valerie Ryan is the deputy KAF designated person.

Lindsay Perry will deal with the process in relation to the child/young person.

Damian Downes is the back up person for both Lindsay Perry and Valerie Ryan in these cases.

In the case of an allegation against a staff member, the staff member will be suspended from their duties pending an investigation.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.
- If allegations are made against the designated member of staff, the deputy designated person should be contacted.
- If allegations are made against the deputy designated member of staff, the back up person will be contacted.
- Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken.
- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation.
- The staff member will be given the opportunity to respond.
- Any breach of the Child protection policy will result in temporary suspension/ removal of duties involving contact with children immediately. The staff member will be brought through a certain procedure of disciplinary measures which are based on the severity of the accusation.
- The chairperson of KAF will be informed as soon as possible.
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with the HSE and Gardaí.
- After consultation, the chairperson/ head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

Complaints and comments procedures

- Complaints or comments received will be responded to immediately.
- Lindsey Perry has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the CEO.
- Verbal complaints will be logged (on an incident form), returned to the office & responded to as soon as possible.

Accidents Procedure

While KAF considers safety a priority in all activities in the event of an accident the following procedures must be undertaken:

In all cases Lindsay Perry should be notified

- Staff must assess the seriousness of the accident and take appropriate action. Medical centre, hospital and local Garda telephone numbers are available from the venue managers manual.
- If the accident is serious primary carers must be notified.
- An accident report form must be completed by a staff member.
- Accident report forms are available from the venue managers manual.
- Events preceding the accident and any other persons involved must be noted along with the actions that were taken. A copy of the accident report will be forwarded to KAF's insurance company without delay.
- A first aid box is available at each venue.