



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Ireland

Version 1.2

DEFINITIONS

- Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Child Protection refers to the situation where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, and action is required to protect that child.
- ‘Children’ includes everyone under the age of 18.
- Designated Liaison Person (DLP): The member of staff responsible for safeguarding and reporting concerns.
- Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP): Supports the DLP and acts in their absence.
- Looked after children: Children in care.

RATIONALE & SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all members of the EC community (including staff, students, volunteers, visitors, partners) who work both inside and outside of EC premises and sets out how the school discharges its responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students at the school.

This safeguarding and child protection policy has links with the wider safeguarding agenda; other relevant policies, external links and procedures are referenced on the final page of this document.

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of pupils/students at EC Dublin by:

- Providing a clear plan for the provision of safeguarding at EC.
- Reducing the potential risks pupils/students face of being exposed to abuse, exploitation or victimisation.
- Outlining responsibilities of all staff and specific roles.
- The establishment of a safe, resilient and robust safeguarding ethos in the school, built on mutual respect and shared values.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- EC recognises that the welfare of its students is paramount.
- All staff at EC have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people attending our schools, irrespective of their role within the school. Through their day-to-day contact with students, staff at the school have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse and reporting them.

EC fully recognises its responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of students under 18 years of age, and vulnerable adults, especially as students may have the added vulnerability of being away from their home country, culture and family.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

EC Dublin is committed to safeguarding children and young people and to ensuring, as far as practicable, that children are safe from harm while attending our programmes.

In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, EC Dublin has carried out a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities.

The school has developed procedures to manage and mitigate these risks, including:

- Safe recruitment and Garda Vetting procedures
- Clear reporting procedures in line with Children First
- Supervision and monitoring of students under 18
- Safeguarding training for all staff
- Codes of behaviour for staff and students
- Procedures for dealing with allegations or concerns

This Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after any material change.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Data Protection Acts 1988–2018 and GDPR

MAIN AREAS OF RISK

The main areas of risk identified are as follows:

- EC staff/students suffering abuse and/or neglect.
- EC staff/students becoming victims of radicalisation, exploitation and/or victimisation.
- Welfare of EC staff/students under threat through external factors or self-harm/neglect.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Whole School Approach

- 1.1 All policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example anti-bullying, equal opportunities, handling, positive behaviour, will be linked to ensure a whole school approach.
- 1.2 The safeguarding policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which should ensure that students are treated with respect and dignity, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- 1.3 Staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.

2. Safer Recruitment, Selection and Follow up

2.1 EC pays full regard to safer recruitment practices including:

- Scrutinising applicants, including interview questioning designed to assess suitability and motivation
- Verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications
- Obtaining professional and character references
- Checking previous employment history
- Ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the role

- Undertaking appropriate checks through **Garda Vetting (National Vetting Bureau)** prior to employment commencing
- Checking that teachers from the EEA (European Economic Area) or other jurisdictions do not have restrictions imposed on their ability to teach or work with children in their own country

2.2 All recruitment materials will include reference to EC's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils.

2.3 Garda Vetting will be renewed every 3 years.

2.4 All staff, homestay hosts, and all adults residing in homestay accommodation are required to undergo Garda Vetting where applicable.

2.5 EC will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed by EC and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and other potential employers, and is included in references where applicable.

2.6 EC will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with students aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them.

2.7 EC will ensure staff are made aware as part of Induction how to report inappropriate sexualized behaviours to the Centre Director.

2.8 Should the result of a background check still be outstanding, EC will ensure that additional safety precautions are implemented,

In the case of a teacher:

- they will not be assigned to a class that has U18 students in attendance
- they will not be assigned any one-to-one lessons
- classroom door where they are assigned will be kept open during all lessons
- they will not be assigned to any extra-curricular activities

In the case of non-teaching staff:

- they will not hold any one-to-one staff/student meetings
- they will not supervise/attend any student activities
- they will not make any accommodation visits/inspections

3. Staff Support

It is recognised the stressful and traumatic nature of safeguarding and child protection work. EC will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DLP and to seek further support, as appropriate.

4. Student Support

EC recognises that:

- Young people who are abused or witness violence may:
 - Find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful.
 - Feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame.
- EC may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of students at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

- That some young people actually adopt abusive behaviours and that appropriate support and intervention may be required.
- High self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect students. Therefore:

EC will promote a culture where abusive or bullying behaviour between students is unacceptable.

EC will establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

Centres will ensure students know that there are people in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty

An induction meeting will be held with Under 18s to explain rules and EC's legal 'Duty of Care'. This will be followed by weekly meetings to check on their welfare and offer them the chance to disclose any concerns.

Opportunities will be provided for students to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and wellbeing.

The discovery that a young person is using illegal drugs or reported evidence of their drug use is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse.
- to believe the student's drug related behaviour is a result of abusing or endangering pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults.
- where the misuse is suspected of being prompted by serious parent/ carer drug misuse.

The school has a Code of Conduct for students, explained to students on their first day and displayed around the school, which advises students that they must "never be unkind to another student", and should "treat everyone with respect".

5. Those Having Additional Safeguarding Needs

EC recognises that certain groups of students within school are more likely to be identified as requiring extra support to meet their safeguarding needs. These could include:

- Under 18s
- Vulnerable adults
- Students with greater cultural differences
Students with disabilities or additional needs
- Students experiencing cultural or social challenges

Those students at greater risk will be regularly monitored and appropriate measures put in place to support their needs.

- EC welcomes and will do its best to provide appropriate support to any student with any type of disability and will advise on what level of support is possible before any decision to book a course is taken.
- EC does not consider its centres an ideal location for wheelchair users. However, EC welcomes wheelchair users if, having been advised as above, they still wish to book a course.

- EC centres with wheelchair access will be highlighted on the centre website and the EC Admissions team will be provided with a detailed list of centres with wheelchair access.
- EC aims to provide appropriate support for students with special educational needs and will advise on a case by case basis what support it can offer before any course booking is made.

6. Supervision & Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

- EC centres will have clear procedures for monitoring and reporting on unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from school/accommodation, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- EC will have a clear supervision policy, with set curfew times for under 18s.

7. Accommodation

EC will accommodate under 18 students (attending its main centres) in host family accommodation only. EC will endeavour to only use residence accommodation with adequate security.

EC centres have a large and ever-changing database of host families. Due to this and the fact that the family members within homestay hosts can change without prior warning, EC acknowledges it cannot guarantee that every adult member of every host family has been background checked. However, its aim is to do so and will put active measures in place to try to meet this aim.

EC will:

- Carry out background checks on all EC Host family hosts and will incorporate safer recruitment practices in its homestay host recruitment procedures.
- Require EC Homestays to update background checks every 3 years.
- Do everything within its power to ensure students under 18 are placed in homestay hosts where every adult member of the family has been background checked.
- Strive to ensure that our accommodation provider carries out background checks on all adult (18+ years) members of every host family household.
- Immediately remove any student from a homestay host where any suspicion of abusive or inappropriate behaviour is raised.
- DLP will report any incident to **Tusla (Child and Family Agency)**
- Provide a clear set of rules and curfew times to students who are under 18.

8. Online Safety and Cyber Bullying

EC is aware that the internet provides individuals access to a wide-range of content, some of which may be harmful and that extremists/groomers use the internet to share messages.

- EC will ensure the filtering systems used in its centres blocks inappropriate content, including extremist content and our IT department will alert senior staff where there are concerns and prevent further access when new sites that are unblocked are found.

- EC will put into place procedures to support and promote E-safety for its students and staff. This will be outlined in the EC E-Safety policy.
- EC is aware that individuals have access to unfiltered internet when using their mobile phones or personal devices. EC staff will be alert to the need for vigilance, especially for those students who are under 18, whilst at the same time respecting our student's right to privacy.
- EC recognises 'Sexting' as a form of Peer on Peer abuse and this is referenced in EC's Anti-Bullying policy.
- EC recognises the dangers inherent in online streaming apps. EC's approach to this is referenced in EC's E-Safety policy.

9. Training

All staff members will receive safeguarding training at induction and regular updates thereafter.

- Training will comply with Children First legislation and national guidance.
- The DLP and Deputy DLP will receive appropriate training to carry out their roles.
- Online safety training for staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach.
- All staff, including sub-contracted and agency staff and volunteers, will be given training to help them understand their safeguarding responsibilities in line with Children First guidance; including recognising signs of vulnerability, exploitation or abuse, and knowing how to report their concerns appropriately.

10. Visitors

Visitors will be made aware of EC's Safeguarding and Child protection related policies on arrival at the school and will be given information about what to do if they are concerned about any aspect of vulnerability.

EC will never allow external speakers, consultants, guides or agencies direct access to students or staff without thoroughly vetting material and individuals beforehand. When external lecturers are brought in, they are often from the police, local educational establishments or companies that work in the community.

EC is aware of the possibility that out-of-hours hire of EC premises may be requested by people wishing to run an event where extremist views may be presented. EC does not accept bookings from individuals or organisations that are extremist in their views and will thoroughly vet any individual/organisation wishing to do so.

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

To ensure confidentiality, Information will only be shared appropriately. Information about a student will be disclosed to members of staff on a need to know basis only.

EC understands the importance of data sharing between agencies, especially in cases of sexual exploitation, and will work in partnership with **Tusla (Child and Family Agency)** and other relevant statutory authorities in the best interests of children. Data protection concerns will not stand in the way of appropriate information sharing in line with Children First guidance and data protection legislation.

Communication with Parents

Where appropriate, communication with parents/guardians will be maintained unless this is not in the best interests of the child.

1. Record Keeping

EC will maintain secure, accurate records of all safeguarding concerns in line with GDPR.

SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURES

All staff have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concern.

- Concerns must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) without delay
- If the DLP is unavailable, concerns must be reported to the Deputy DLP
- The DLP will assess and report concerns to Tusla where appropriate
- In cases of immediate risk, An Garda Síochána or emergency services must be contacted

All concerns will be recorded and stored securely.

MANDATED PERSONS

Where staff are classified as mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, they are required to report concerns that meet the threshold directly to Tusla.

All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities under Children First legislation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Staff

All staff should be made aware of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality and aware of their duties to report and record any safeguarding or child protection concerns they may have in accordance with centre safeguarding and child protection procedures.

All staff need to be aware of the systems within EC which support safeguarding and child protection – this forms part of the induction process but also on-going training which is regularly updated.

All staff should:

- Understand and accept that staff who work within a school have a duty of care to model appropriate social behaviours and to ensure that the professional role of trust is not abused.
- Read, understand, sign and adhere to EC's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- Be clear on the difference between safeguarding and child protection.
- Promote EC's policies and guidance.
- Know the names of the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** and **Deputy DLP** at their centre and how to contact them.
- Know Senior Management members responsible for safeguarding.
- Attend safeguarding training.
- Be aware of the school's procedures in order to identify those pupils in need of early intervention/help and take appropriate action where there are concerns for the welfare and protection of children and young people.
- Adhere to EC's staff code of conduct as set out in the EC staff handbook and behaviour management policies.
- Know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality whilst at the same time

liaising with relevant professionals such as the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** and relevant statutory agencies.

- Never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about an allegation, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- Report concerns about a child/young person immediately or as soon as it is practicable to the **DLP**. However, if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to **Tusla (Child and Family Agency)** or **An Garda Síochána** immediately.
- Recognise that to allow or condone bullying constitutes a lack of duty of care.
- Be aware of signs of abuse or neglect, including peer-on-peer abuse.
- Be aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with students as advised within the document “Staff Handbook”, supplied to all new members of staff as part of their training and induction.
- Personally report to the **DLP** cases where they become aware of a child protection concern.
- Report any potential safeguarding concerns about an individual’s behaviour towards children and young people immediately. Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the **DLP**, who will decide on any action required in line with Children First guidance.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Operational leadership is responsible for the approval of and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy. This will be carried out through the receiving of regular information regarding Safeguarding & Child Protection incidents and monitoring reports.

The Operational leadership will ensure that:

- EC has a safeguarding policy in accordance with relevant legislation and this is reviewed annually.
- EC operates, “safer recruitment” procedures and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and relevant volunteers.
- Members of each centre’s senior leadership team is appointed as the DLP, which forms part of their job description.
- DLP attends appropriate refresher training every two years.
- Centres remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to their attention without delay.
- Centres have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff/volunteers.
- The Head of Operations is appointed with a specific brief for safeguarding and child protection and will liaise with the Centre Directors and DLPs. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils/students.
- The member of the Operational Leadership nominated to be responsible for safeguarding will be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Centre Director/DLP.

CENTRE DIRECTOR

The Centre Director will:

- Hold overall responsibility for the provision of safeguarding of staff, students and anyone else in the centre, including teachers, non-teaching staff, students and visitors, (including contractors).
- Ensure their centre has a DLP, who have undertaken appropriate training.
- Ensure DLP training is updated every two years.
- Together with the DLP, ensure all staff in the centre have received appropriate child protection and safeguarding training.
- Recognise the importance of the role of the DLP and ensure s/he has the time and training to undertake her/his duties.
- Report incidents to the Head of Operations, especially cases where a referral is made.
- Ensure the availability of the DLP during term time and school hours for staff at the centre to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure there are contingency arrangements should the DLP not be available.
- Ensure that the DLP takes advice from a child protection specialist when managing complex cases.

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

Director of Studies are responsible for (either by assuming this responsibility themselves or by appointing an academic staff member to undertake):

- Ensuring under 18s in the centre are highlighted to all academic staff.
- Absences and behavioural issues with under 18s are reported to the DLP immediately.

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)

The DLP is a senior member of centre staff, who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding child protection within the centre. Responsible for:

- Managing referrals to other agencies including:

Tusla (Child and Family Agency)

An Garda Síochána - in cases where a crime may have been committed in relation to safeguarding.

- Work with others to fulfil statutory responsibilities in relation to children and young people subject to a child protection plan by attending child protection case conferences and implementing the multiagency child protection plan; and liaise with **Tusla and relevant statutory authorities** where there are concerns about the conduct or an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer at the school (N.B. if there is an allegation against the DLP, the member of the Operational Leadership nominated to be responsible for safeguarding will liaise with Tusla).
- Undertake training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role.
- Raise awareness to ensure EC's safeguarding and child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately. The DLP (if not the Centre Director) will also report to the Centre Director on safeguarding and child protection activity within the school.
- Together with the Centre Director, ensure all staff in the centre have received appropriate child protection and safeguarding training.
- Manage safeguarding information through the collection, monitoring, reviewing, safe storage and transfer of safeguarding and child protection files.
- Be available for staff at the centre to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

DEPUTY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

Supports the DLP and acts in their absence.

TEACHING STAFF

Teaching staff will:

Report absences of under 18s to DOS/ADOS immediately.

HOMESTAY HOSTS

Homestay hosts will:

- Know the names of the DLP at EC Dublin and how to contact them
- Support EC in promoting good practice and endorse the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – IRELAND.
- Liaise with the centre DLP on safeguarding issues and the welfare of the students residing with them.
- Report issues with under 18s to the centre immediately. E.g. illness, absence, breaking of curfew.

KEY CONTACTS

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Kenny Moynihan

Deputy DLP: Marta Di Pierro

Tusla Child and Family Agency: www.tusla.ie

An Garda Síochána: Emergency 999 / 112

Local Tusla Office: Churchtown Primary Care Centre, Churchtown, Dublin 14

D14 NT35, Tel: 01 921 3400

Out of Hours emergency:

Tusla Emergency Social Work Service 0818 776

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and aligned with regulatory requirements and best practice in learner welfare.

Version Control

Version	Description of Changes	Release Date
1.0	Initial Version	10/08/2017
1.2	Updated Version	22/01/2026

Contact Information

Name	Isabel Ribeiro
Position	Head of Operations
E-mail	isabelribeiro@ecenglish.com