

Clare CCC Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

1. Introduction (P.2)
2. Declaration of Guiding Principles (P.9)
3. Key Roles in Safeguarding (P.10)
 - 3.1 Named Person
 - 3.2 Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person
4. Recognising Child Safeguarding Concerns (P.12)
5. Reporting Procedure – Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns (P.15)
6. Child Safeguarding Procedures (P.17)
 - Policy for Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Workers
 - Confidentiality Procedure
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Recruitment and Selection Procedure
 - Garda Vetting Procedure
 - Induction Procedure
 - Supervision and Support Procedure
 - Complaints Procedure
 - Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are Mandated Persons
7. Implementing, Monitoring and Reviewing Child Safeguarding Procedures (P.27)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Types of Abuse (P.29)

Appendix 2: Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse from a Child (P.32)

Appendix 3: Contact Details (P.33)

Appendix 4: Child Safeguarding Self-Declaration Form (P.34)

Appendix 5: Child Safeguarding Policy Declaration Form (P.35)

1. Introduction

The Children First National Guidance states that all organisations that provide services to children should have detailed child safeguarding policies and procedures in place. While most City and County Childcare Committees do not provide services directly to children, they provide support and guidance to ELC and SAC services and are in frequent contact with these services. There also are circumstances that require CCC workers to visit ELC and SAC services where they do come into contact with children.

Within this document there are guiding principles set out that demonstrate Clare CCC will meet their commitment and responsibility to keep children safe and promote their welfare and best interests.

Clare CCC operates under a child centred ethos and the best interest of the child is paramount in all work that is carried out.

Clare CCC workers will adhere to Clare CCC's child safeguarding procedures throughout the course of their work.

This document has been developed using:

[The Child Safeguarding Resource Document; Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedures Guidance for Early Learning and Care and School Aged Childcare Services in Ireland](#)

Tusla's [Child Safeguarding; A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2nd ed.](#)

**Workers at Clare County Childcare Committees are not Mandated
Persons under the Children First Act, 2015.**

Services Delivered by City and County Childcare Committees

The following is a list of services that are provided by City and County Childcare Committees.

For 2025, the following objectives have been identified to assist in guiding the work of the City/County Childcare Committees:

Objective 1: Support DCEDIY's Finance, Compliance, Research and Data Unit to:

1. Provide one to one support to services to assist them in being compliant. NB. This is separate to providing supports following a compliance visit under the Compliance Framework.
2. Contact ELC and SAC services who have major non- compliances following an inspection in accordance with the Compliance Framework requirements.
3. Publicise & circulate compliance related supports (compliance guides etc.)
4. Support the DCEDIY in the development and distribution of supports for services to help them achieve and maintain scheme compliance.

Objective 2: Support DCEDIY's Quality Unit to:

1. Regulatory and Inspections support:
Continue to provide information and/or one to one support to ELC/ SAC services in relation to: * Tusla Early Years inspections (Pre/Post Registration, Pre/Post Inspection and CAPA) * Department of Education Early Years Education inspections.
2. Support the Delivery of the National Child Safeguarding Programme.
3. Support the development of Irish language and Irish medium provision.
4. Support the development of outdoor play-based learning (indoor settings using outdoor spaces, indoor/outdoor settings and outdoor settings) with potential and existing ELC, SAC and Childminding settings
5. Support the development of SAC services. Provide supports and information to SAC services to raise awareness of the National Quality Guidelines.

6. To connect with services in cluster groups to discuss a range of topics relating to quality using a “Communities of Professional Practice approach”.
7. Continue to contribute to the national roll out of Síolta and Aistear in coordination with the National Síolta Aistear Team.
8. Supporting the national roll out of the Children’s Participation Framework.
9. Support ELC and SAC services and relevant Childminders with the quality requirement of their Core Funding (Equal Start) contract – Quality and Inclusive Practice Plan (QIPP).
10. Support the implementation of the National Action Plan for Childminding.
11. Day to day support for childminders.
12. Childminding Development Grants.
13. Data collection Childminding.
14. Support additional training opportunities for Childminders.
15. Communication Strategy.

Objective 3: Support DCEDIY’s Workforce Unit to:

1. Administration of the Learner Fund Bursary Scheme for 2025.
2. Support promotion and rollout of new Nurturing Skills Learner Fund.
3. Support promotion of and rollout of Nurturing Skills.
4. Facilitate the recruitment of staff into the sector for example engaging with ELC/SAC service providers, local further and higher education institutions, local DSP/Intreo offices and ELC Graduates (Levels 5-8).

Objective 4: Support DCEDIY’s Governance and Systems Development Unit to:

1. Support the participation of any CCC colleagues involved in formal consultation activities, including thematic working groups, established to implement the recommendation arising out of the Review of the ELC and SAC Operating Model.

2. All CCCs commit to supporting the DCEDIY programme of interim improvements for the current ELC/SAC operating model identified in the Review including the provision of information and/or data to DCEDIY or its independent agents. This DCEDIY programme of interim improvements will focus broadly on identifying an optimal online offering across CCCs, identifying opportunities for shared service provision to reduce administrative overheads, and examining of governance arrangements across all CCCs to identify best practice.

Objective 5: Support DCEDIY's FENNOG Unit to:

1. Provide information and assistance to ELC and SAC services including one-to-one in relation to the National Childcare Scheme (NCS), ECCE and the CCSP Saver programme.
2. Provide information and support to parents in relation to the rules/general queries with regards to the NCS ECCE and CCSP Saver.
3. Ensure CCC website information is checked regularly and kept up to date in line with all DCEDIY national childcare funded programmes.
4. Check all fees included on the universal fees table over Q2 & Q3 of 2025 to ensure they comply with the scheme rules of NCS, ECCE & CCSP Savers.
5. Approve minimum number exemption applications for ECCE.
6. Supporting the following parents in accessing the NCS:
 - Parents who would wish to apply for the NCS who need additional support in to understanding the process, accessing a computer for applying, filling in the form or with the application process itself.
 - Parents who wish to apply for the NCS but have literacy or language difficulties who may need additional capacity to understand the process and/or offer assistance with understanding their entitlements and with the application process itself.
 - Parents who may be entitled to the NCS sponsorship arrangement by directing them to the relevant statutory body relevant to their needs.

7. Assist and support ELC and SAC services by providing information in relation to "sponsor" arrangements under the NCS.
8. Compile and publish on CCC websites a list of Parent & Toddler Groups in the area.
9. Provide feedback to DCEDIY on the Parent and Toddler Grant (and other potential supports that exist for those providing informal care).
10. Administer the Parent and Toddler Grant as per DCEDIY guidelines.
11. Support parents/guardians to understand their childcare choices, to ask the right questions when choosing their ELC or SAC provider and to access relevant.
12. CCCs to keep an updated directory of ELC and SAC services within their CCC area.
13. Provide information and/or data to DCEDIY to support Parliamentary business and other ad hoc requests.

Objective 6: Support DCEDIY's Access and Inclusion Unit to:

1. Participate in working groups that will be established to progress actions contained in First 5 as needed (one CCC nominee per working group).
2. Continue to provide support in the response to the Ukrainian crisis and the integration of IPAS families as agreed with joint working group.
3. Continue to support the implementation and promotion of My Little Library and Little Book at Bedtime initiatives for families, including actions connecting ELCs and SACs to their local library service.
4. Support DCEDIY policy development.
5. Communicate with Parents in relation to Access and Inclusion Model (AIM):

This will include undertaking the following activities: Promote AIM to parents and communities through inclusion of AIM information and materials when engaging with families in line with the AIM Communication Guidelines Promote and explain AIM to individual parents with children who may benefit from AIM Support parents to access AIM by providing support to access a preschool place for their child and to access AIM support.

6. Communication to Pre- schools in relation to Access and Inclusion Model (AIM): This will include undertaking the following activities: Promote AIM to Pre- school services through inclusion of AIM information and materials when engaging with all services in line with the AIM Communication Guidelines. Identify and support services who haven't engaged with AIM to date Promote AIM to individual services and provide support in accessing targeted support including the Access and Inclusion Profile and the AIM Level 7 application process. Have knowledge of and explain the rules of AIM to ELCs. Promote the LINC Inclusion Coordinator programme, the Level 3 training and the Universal Design Guidelines to pre-school services.

7. Engage with AIM at policy level as requested by DCEDIY/Pobal. Participate in groups as required to promote and support the implementation of policy and delivery of AIM including the AIM Steering Group, the Complex Healthcare Needs Group, Cross Sectoral Implementation Group (CSIG) and other groups.

8. DEI and Inclusion Charter Roll out the revised Equality Diversity and Inclusion training including the mentoring aspects to promote and develop the Inclusion Charter in targeted settings.

9. Equal Start: Support the DCEDIY with the roll out of Equal Start as required. Provide supports and information to the priority services in Tier 1 and Tier 2 and universal.

10. Respond to critical incidents.

11. Participate in Training of Trainer for critical incident planning. Roll out critical incident training

Objective 7: To support DCEDIY's Sector Development Unit to:

1. Provide one to one support and information to assist possible new ELC and SAC services in the start-up phase.

2. Provide one to one case management support and information to existing ELC and SAC Services. Providing updates to Pobal on an ongoing basis and collaborating with Pobal as necessary.

3. In the day-to-day support of services, if CCC's identify patterns of emerging/ongoing issues within services will contact both Pobal and DCEDIY Case Management team and provide a report to them on same. The accompanying list of issues is not to be taken as an exhaustive list.
4. Provide case management support and information to existing ELC and SAC services in relation to business operations. This includes collaborating with Pobal in developing all Sustainability Funding requests for all partner services including private and not for profit services. This includes carrying out the Operational review element of the process providing further information to support a funding request as necessary such as the developing of service specific engagement and action plans.
5. Attend and contribute to the monthly Case Management meetings with Pobal; report on services supported.
6. CCC participation in Pobal- led or other training on case management tools to enhance CCC capacity to support ELC & SAC services in relation to governance, finance, reporting requirements and case management tools.
7. Deliver training workshops and or information workshops to ELCs/SACs in relation to governance, finance, reporting requirements and case management tools.
8. Provide support with the administration and coordination of focus groups and surveys to determine governance and compliance needs of service providers.
9. Support services with queries and difficulties throughout the Core Funding programme year cycle, including applying, updating or making changes to an application, and reporting requirements.
10. Deliver training workshops and/or information workshops in relation to the administration of Core Funding including the development of Core Funding Fee Table and Parent Statements, applying updating, or making changes to an application, and supporting Partner Services in fulfilling their Core Funding reporting requirements.

11.Support and promote the development and implementation of the New Funding Model by providing support with surveys, stakeholder consultation and other research tools.

12.Carry out Core Funding Program Year 3 Fee Table and Parent Statement approvals. As part of program readiness for Year 4.

13.Provide support to Service Providers, Parents/guardians, Pobal, and DCEDIY in relation to Fee Review Queries. Forwarding complex fee queries to Pobal and potential fee increases to the National Fee Review Team.

Objective 8: Support DCEDIY’s Supply Management Unit to:

1. Support and assist DCEDIY in forward planning for ELC and SAC to ascertain current and future supply and demand.

2. Provide local data and information to DCEDIY as required in relation to supply interventions in local areas’.

3. Support and facilitate providers in completing and submitting Capital Grant Applications as required.

4. Liaise with other local agencies and stakeholders.

2. Declaration of Guiding Principles

Clare CCC believes that the best interests of children are paramount. We believe that all children have the right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration in all decisions affecting them.

Our guiding principles are underpinned by [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#), Tusla’s [Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and legislation including the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2024, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Acts 2012-2016.

Our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures apply to all paid workers, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation.

All committee/board members, staff members and other stakeholders must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

We will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

3. Key Roles in Safeguarding

In line with best practice, Clare CCC have nominated workers to the following roles to safeguard children:

3.1 Named Person

Clare CCC have nominated a Named Person to lead on the development of the child safeguarding procedures for this organisation. This Named Person will refer to relevant publications to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice.

Clare CCC Executive has appointed the named person.

Named Person: Yvonne Broderick

Contact Phone Number: 086 0491117

Contact Email Address: yvonne.broderick@clarechildcare.ie

3.2 Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person

In keeping with best practice, Clare CCC have appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPS). Please note that there may be a crossover of roles where the DLP/DDLP may also be the Named Person. The DLP will be a resource to any worker who has a child protection or welfare concern. The DLP is responsible for ensuring that organisational reporting procedures are followed correctly

DLP: Miranda Cooke

DLP Contact Phone Number: 086 7280044

DLP Contact Email Address: miranda.cooke@clarechildcare.ie

DDLPS: Yvonne Broderick

DDLPS Contact Phone Number: 086 0491117

DDLPS Contact Email Address: yvonne.broderick@clarechildcare.ie

DDLPS: Caroline O'Neill

DDLPS Contact Phone Number: 086 7280001

DDLPS Contact Email Address: caroline.oneill@clarechildcare.ie

and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies. The DDLP will be available in the absence of the DLP

Roles and Responsibilities of the DLP/DDLP:

- Be fully familiar with the Clare CCC's responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children
- Have good knowledge of the organisation's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures
- Ensure that the organisation's reporting procedure is followed, so that child safeguarding concerns are referred promptly to Tusla
- Receive safeguarding concerns from workers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker through the Dedicated Contact Point, if necessary
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of their organisation, using the Tusla Web Portal. If for any reason the DLP is unable to access the Tusla Web Portal, a hard copy of the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form and/or Retrospective Abuse Report Form may be submitted to Tusla by registered post.
- Record all child protection or welfare concerns, or allegations of child abuse, brought to your attention as well as any action taken in response to these concerns.
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage and store confidential records.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and The Garda Síochána, as appropriate.

Best Practice in Appointing a Designated Liaison Person/Deputy Designated Liaison Person:

1. The CEO/Chairperson of the Board will appoint and name a DLP and Deputy DLP's
2. The Deputy DLP's will act in the place of the DLP when the DLP is not available i.e., annual leave or sick leave
3. The DLP/DDLP's should be in a senior position within the CCC and should have a strong knowledge of Child Safeguarding procedures within their own organisation and should also have a clear understanding of how to make child protection and welfare reports to Tusla.
4. The DLP/DDLP's should be facilitated to attend training that is relevant to their child safeguarding role
5. Ensure that both the DLP and DDLP's are accessible to all workers and that their contact details are available to all. Names and contact details should be prominently displayed.
6. If for any reason the DLP/DDLP's are working from home, the staff team will be made aware of this and the DLP/DDLP's can be contacted where there is a child safeguarding concern.

4. Recognising Child Safeguarding Concerns

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, states that child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

- **Neglect:** Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.
- **Emotional abuse:** Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child.
- **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.
- **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

The definitions and features of abuse can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children, and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

CCC workers may encounter child protection or welfare concerns in a variety of situations. It is important for CCC workers to follow their own reporting procedures, which will include what to do when encountering an issue when visiting a service

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

Tusla should always be informed where there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Children First National Guidance (page 6), lists the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence, for example, an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying, or indicating by other means, that he or she has been abused
- An admission or indication by an adult or a child, of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

Remember, it is not up to the worker to prove that abuse has occurred, their role is to recognise the indicators of abuse and follow their reporting procedures and report concerns, through their DLP, to Tusla without delay

Safeguarding or welfare concerns may arise whilst CCC workers are visiting a service. This may be in the form of an observation or receiving information from workers/parents/other stakeholders in the service. If the CCC worker receives information about or observes a situation that relates to the possible abuse of a child, the worker must follow Clare CCC's reporting procedure, via their DLP and make a report to Tusla Duty Social Work. The worker should also alert the DLP in the service, who will in turn follow the service's reporting procedure.

Sample Scenarios

Scenario 1: Receive a Child Safeguarding Concern query – No details/identifying information.

CCC workers may receive a query relating to a child safeguarding concern, which does not include any details or identifying information. This may come through a phone call or other correspondence. This may come from a number of sources such as ELC/SAC worker, parent, a member of the public or other stakeholder.

- ELC/SAC workers will be directed to follow their service's reporting procedure and seek advice from the Duty social worker.
- All others will be directed to report the concern directly to Tusla.
- The caller will be provided with the appropriate contact information for Tusla social work.

Scenario 2: Caller wants to disclose a Child Safeguarding Concern.

CCCs may receive a call where the caller states that they wish to disclose a child safeguarding concern.

- The caller will be asked not to share information with Clare CCC.

- ELC/SAC workers will be directed to follow their service's reporting procedure and report their concern to Tusla social work.
- All others will be directed to report the concern directly to Tusla.
- Where **identifying information is given**, the Clare CCC worker will follow Clare CCCs reporting procedure
- If **limited information is provided** and the Clare CCC worker has concerns relating to the situation, they must follow Clare CCC's reporting procedure

Scenario 3: Witness an incident/receive a disclosure (children & families) at an external event (outside of office).

CCC workers may come into contact with children and their families in the course of their work. This may be in an external venue or it may be outside of standard working hours, for example at a training evening in a community centre. CCC workers may witness a situation that raises a child safeguarding concern. In this situation, the Clare CCC reporting procedure will be followed. As always, if there is an immediate risk to any child or if it is not possible to contact Tusla, the Clare CCC worker will contact An Garda Síochána.

Scenario 4: Retrospective Disclosure of Abuse

CCC workers may receive a disclosure in relation to retrospective abuse. Retrospective abuse disclosures must be reported to Tusla for the following reasons:

- There may be a current risk to children. This applies whether there are identified or unidentified children who may be at risk from the alleged abuser.
- There may be a criminal aspect to the disclosure. Child abuse is a crime and you will need to decide if An Garda Síochána needs to be informed. Also, if there may be an immediate risk to a child/ren and if Tusla cannot be contacted the Gardaí need to be contacted without delay.
- Support for the person who has made the disclosure. The person who alleges that they have experienced abuse as a child may wish to avail of counselling supports. It is important to help the alleged adult victim to access the most appropriate support service based on their needs at that time.

In this situation, workers will follow Clare CCCs Reporting Procedure and report concerns to Tusla, through their DLP

IF THE WORKER IS UNSURE IN ANY SITUATION, THEY MUST, THROUGH THEIR DLP,

-
- **CCCS DO NOT HAVE AN ADVISORY ROLE TO ELC AND SAC SERVICES WHERE THERE IS A CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE CONCERN.**
 - **SERVICES SHOULD NOT CONTACT CCCS IN RELATION TO CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE CONCERNS.**
 - **IF A SERVICE CONTACTS CLARE CCC ABOUT A CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE CONCERN, THEY SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO CONTACT TUSLA**
-

CONTACT TUSLA DUTY SOCIAL WORK FOR INFORMAL CONSULTATION

5. Reporting Procedures - Responding to and Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children requires organisations to have reporting procedures in place. These procedures must be understood and followed by all workers within the organisation. Everyone should be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused or at risk of being abused. Everyone should know how to recognise and respond to the possibility of abuse or neglect, so as to ensure that the most effective steps are taken to protect a child and to contribute to the ongoing safety of children.

The process of identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect can be difficult for both the person who makes the report and the families involved. However, a failure to act when abuse or neglect is occurring can result in children being left in harmful situations and could potentially result in long term damage to their well-being.

There are many reasons why a worker may be concerned about the welfare or protection of a child or young person. *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* states that Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

All workers have a responsibility to safeguard children and to report, to Tusla, any concerns they may have for the protection or welfare of a child.

Clare CCC Workers are not Mandated Persons, therefore there is currently no procedure in place for reporting as a Mandated Person or detail re requirements for Mandated Assisting. If a Mandated person was employed as a Clare CCC worker, the reporting procedure will be updated to account for this. As is legally required there is a procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons.

Regardless of how a concern comes to a worker's attention, it should be reported to the DLP.

A child or young person may disclose to a trusted person that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children may have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child hints at or tells a worker that he or she is being harmed by someone, it must be treated in a sensitive way. It is important that workers are aware of how to respond

to a child who discloses abuse. Further information on this can be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

All members of the Board of Management must also be familiar with Clare CCC's Child Safeguarding Procedures.

Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns

Adhering to this reporting procedure will ensure that correct procedures are followed to safeguard children and that due regard is given to confidentiality and appropriate record keeping.

**Visiting an ELC or SAC service:
WHERE CONCERNS ARISE WHEN VISITING AN ELC OR
SAC SERVICE, THE CCC WORKER SHOULD CONSIDER In
DISCUSSION WITH THE CLARE CCC DLP, WHETHER
THEY SHOULD INFORM THE DLP OF THE SERVICE, IN
ADDITION TO FOLLOWING THEIR OWN REPORTING
PROCEDURE**

Clare CCC workers will adhere to the following steps when a child safeguarding concern arises.

- **Recording** – Clare CCC workers must record all child safeguarding concerns in writing using a standardised recording form and these records must be given to the DLP. Workers in Clare CCC will inform the DLP of all child safeguarding concerns
- **Records** must be factual and include details of concern and any actions that have been taken in relation to the concern(s)
- The DLP must ensure that the organisation's **reporting procedure** is followed, so that child safeguarding concerns are referred promptly to Tusla
- For child safeguarding concerns that arise for a CCC worker while **visiting an ELC or SAC service**, the worker must discuss these concerns with Clare CCC DLP and make a decision whether to inform the DLP of the service.
- The DLP will be fully familiar with the Clare CCC's responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children and have good knowledge of the organisation's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures. In conjunction with the DLP, the person with the child safeguarding concern will establish that **reasonable grounds** for concern exist.
- If reasonable grounds for concern have been established, **a report must be made to Tusla, jointly**, by the person with the concern and the DLP. If the DLP is unsure that

reasonable grounds for concern exist, they may seek informal consultation with a Tusla social worker. Informal consultation can be sought through Tusla's Dedicated Contact Points

- If there is an immediate risk to a child or children and Tusla cannot be contacted, the DLP must contact **An Garda Síochána**
- Reporting to Tusla – reports should be made to Tusla using the [Tusla Web Portal](#) under the Clare CCC Account. Where the Tusla **Web portal** cannot be accessed, the Child Protection and Welfare Report Forms and/or Retrospective Report Forms should be downloaded, completed and posted to Tusla by registered post. Contact details can be found through the [Tusla Dedicated Contact Points](#)
https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_Web_Portal_User_Guide.pdf
- If a report is being made to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána by Clare CCC, Clare CCC will consider who the information needs to be shared with, in line with their Confidentiality Procedure.
- If a report is being made to Tusla, the Clare CCC DLP/Deputy DLP's will be aware of this, which includes the Clare CCC Manager (DDL) and the Chair of the Board will be informed by the Manager, that a report has been made, but no identifying information will be shared.
- Retrospective abuse disclosures must be reported to Tusla. Reports should be made to Tusla using the [Tusla Web Portal](#). Where the Tusla Web portal cannot be accessed, the Retrospective Abuse Report Form should be downloaded, completed and posted to Tusla by registered post. Contact details can be found through the [Tusla Dedicated Contact Points](#)

Recording:

- All safeguarding concerns must be recorded on a standardised form
- Records will be managed by the DLP and held in a dedicated child safeguarding file which is locked and accessible only by the DLP and when needed the Deputy DLP.
- Records must be factual and include details of concern and any actions that have been taken in relation to the concern(s)

6. Child Safeguarding Procedures

Clare CCC has procedures in place for the effective management of workers to ensure good child safeguarding practice. These are listed below.

- Policy for Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Workers
- Confidentiality Procedure
- Code of Behaviour
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Garda Vetting Procedure

- Induction Procedure
- Supervision and Support Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are Mandated Persons

Policy for Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Workers

Clare CCC have a procedure in place for responding to allegations of abuse made against workers.

An allegation may be made against a worker who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/young person
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person
- Behaved towards a child/young person or children/young people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/young person
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to the service's Code of Behaviour for workers
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines

Management must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the organisation's guiding principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures. Management must always ensure that the best interests of the child are paramount, balanced with fairness to the employee and based on the laws of natural justice and employment legislation.

Clare CCC has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child and the worker. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

1. The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child
2. The internal personnel procedure for dealing with the worker.

It is recommended that two different people are appointed to manage each procedure. In some staff teams, it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the parties. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting the matter to Tusla, while a person must be appointed to take responsibility for addressing the employment issues. The Manager/Chairperson of Clare CCC will take on the latter role as appropriate to the situation. For example, if the allegation was against the Manager; the Chairperson will take on this role.

In relation to allegations of abuse against workers, Clare CCCs reporting procedure must always be followed by all workers.

- The first priority is for the safety of the child. The risk of harm to a child should be at the forefront of any decisions made or actions taken
- Clare CCCs internal personnel procedures for dealing with a worker who is the subject of an allegation of abuse needs to be clearly outlined
- All workers in Clare CCC are aware of who to contact should they become aware of or make an allegation of abuse or neglect against any worker

Where an allegation of abuse by a worker arises, there must be a specified person (Clare CCC Manager/Chairperson) who addresses the employment issues and privately informs the worker of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation
- The worker should be given an opportunity to respond
- In a situation where an allegation has been made against a worker, protective measures that are proportionate to the level of risk must be taken to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.

Where an allegation of abuse by a worker arises, there must be a specified person who addresses the child safeguarding procedures that must be followed, including:

- If appropriate, parents should be informed of any action planned and taken while having regard to the rights to confidentiality of others, such as the person against whom the allegation has been made
- Liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochána should be maintained, as appropriate
- All stages of the procedure should be recorded and these records should be maintained in line with Data Protection regulations and legislation
- Disciplinary procedures should be in place and followed, as appropriate
- When an allegation is made against a worker, a quick resolution should be sought for the benefit of all concerned

Legal advice should be sought at the earliest opportunity if the CCC is dealing with an allegation of abuse against a worker

Confidentiality Procedure

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of the professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

As per the Clare CCC Confidentiality policy:

- All information regarding a concern about child protection or welfare should be shared on a need-to-know basis, in the best interest of the child.

- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given and this should be made clear to all.
- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection
- Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child or the reporter at risk or impede Tusla's assessment.
- Information will be shared as necessary and appropriate with Tusla, in the best interests of the child.
- Safeguarding concerns records must be stored securely, in a separate storage cabinet to other records.
- Any information relevant to child safeguarding concerns held on the Clare CCC shared documents drive is password protected.
- If a report is made to Tusla, the Clare CCC DLP/Deputy DLP's will be aware of this, which includes the Clare CCC Manager (DDL) and the Chair of the Board will be informed by the Manager, that a report has been made, but no identifying information will be shared.

If there is a situation where the DLP decides not to make a report, The DLP should advise the worker who raised the concern of this decision and the reasons why. The DLP should also advise the worker, that should they remain concerned, they can independently report to Tusla. In reporting to Tusla, the worker is protected from civil liability and/or penalisation by an employer under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently in good faith.

Clare CCC Code of Behaviour

There is a Code of Behaviour for workers, which specifies acceptable and unacceptable practices relating to interactions with children while carrying out their work with Clare CCC. This applies to work both in the Clare CCC offices, in the community, in accommodation centres and when visiting ELC/SAC services. At all times, Clare CCC ensure that staff's interactions with children are at all times child centred and appropriate, in line with the Aistear Curriculum Framework, Síolta Quality Framework, the Access and Inclusion Model and other such relevant frameworks.

- Listen to children and respect the rights of the child.
- Work in a professional manner, showing sensitivity and respect for children and their families.
- Respect all cultures, classes and beliefs without discrimination.
- Respect all relevant policies and procedures that keep children safe from harm.
- Comply with all relevant legislation and regulations in services.
- Avoid one to one situations with a child, it is better if their parent/guardian or another worker is present.
- Do not single out a particular child for unfair favouritism, criticism or ridicule.
- Do not use/allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical conduct and/or verbal language.

- Do not hit or physically chastise children.
- Gain parent/guardian signed consent if children are to be included in any promotional/ information material/ service is participating in any projects with Clare CCC.
- If you are required to visit the homes of childminders in the course of their work. During these visits workers are expected to adhere to their responsibilities stated above and also to ensure all situations involving children are guided by the child safeguarding policy.
- Never engage in intimate care tasks with children, never allow yourself to be left in a position where you are supervising children in the absence of parents/staff and should also ensure that their visits/sessions are agreed with the Manager of Clare CCC, planned, and structured with a clear purpose.

Any breaches of the code of behaviour will be addressed in line with Clare CCC Disciplinary Policy, as deemed necessary, and in Support & Supervision sessions.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Clare County Childcare Committee is an Equal Opportunities Employer. The following procedure must be followed for all staff appointments. Please refer to the full policy as required:

- Each appointment is advertised on in one or more of the following means; National Newspapers, Local Newspapers, Activelink or other forum as may be appropriate, Recruited internally, if appropriate and a copy of each advertisement is kept on the recruitment file.
- A copy of all CVs received before the application deadline must be kept on file in line with data retention requirements.
- The HR sub-committee will then short list the candidates for interview based on criteria set out in the job description and person specification for the role.
- Letters must be sent inviting candidates for interview giving when possible at least one weeks' notice. A copy of all letters must be kept on file.
- A record of the interview attendance must be kept on file.
- Each candidate interviewed is assessed following a standardised scoring sheet.
- Each member of the interview board must sign the completed interview appraisal schedule.
- Copy of the letter of offer to the successful candidate, together with copies of letters informing the remainder of the applicants they were not successful must be kept on file. Prior to an offer of employment being made, two references from previous employers (including the most recent) must be obtained. References must be verified by the employer either by phone or in person, where referees are asked specific questions regarding the suitability of the applicant.
- The Board must authorise all appointments and they must be ratified in the minutes.
- A copy of each job description must be kept on each employee's personnel file.

- Formal contracts must be signed with all staff members and should be in place throughout the duration of the individual's employment with the company. A declaration form will be given to each new employee to allow them to self-declare any other relevant information in relation to their suitability to work with children.

Garda Vetting Procedure

Garda Vetting is conducted in respect of any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons. Not all CCC workers require Garda Vetting due to the fact that the position does not always meet the criteria outlined by the Garda Vetting Bureau. If the position is one which meets the criteria of 'a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons' Garda Vetting must be applied for.

As per best practice guidance Clare CCC use a child safeguarding self-declaration form.

Induction Procedure

All individuals are furnished with the Clare CCC Child Safeguarding Procedure and Code of Behaviour, including information on child safeguarding roles in Clare CCC.

Information provided in the Induction Procedure includes:

- Name and contact details of the named person
- Name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)
- Name and contact details of the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)
- A copy of Clare CCC's child safeguarding procedures and code of behaviour
- A copy of Clare CCC's child safeguarding training strategy
- Instruction to complete the Tusla Always Children First e-Learning Programme
- Where possible Clare CCC workers will attend the NCSP Always Children First Foundation Level Programme

New workers will be given an opportunity to discuss and raise any questions relating to the child safeguarding procedures with the DLP.

Workers will also be asked when they have completed any child safeguarding training to give their training certificates to the Manager.

Supervision and Support Procedure

Providing supervision and support to workers helps to maintain best practice and the safeguarding of children. Supervision provides a regular, structured opportunity to discuss work, provide support, review practice and progress and plan for future personal development. Clare County Childcare is committed to ensuring that all employees have the opportunity to reflect on their performance and have their issues and concerns addressed in a planned and structured manner.

- At Clare County Childcare we promote and support employee development by providing employees with regular support and supervision meetings, as per the Clare CCC Employee Support and Supervision Policy.
- The Company recognises its responsibility to ensure that all employees have regular supervision and support for their work. The nature and amount of this provision will be arranged with each employee.

All employees must have a regular supervision meeting with the Manager based on a negotiated agreement to:

- Support them in their work,
- Ensure that they are clear about their role and responsibilities (including those as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Procedures document),
- Ensure competent and accountable performance,
- Ensure that, in their respective roles, they meet Clare CCC standards and objectives (including those as outlined in the code of behaviour for working with children),
- Ensure a positive atmosphere for practice,
- Support their professional development,
- Help keep stress to a minimum,
- Increase awareness of new areas of professional knowledge,
- Ensure that they are given the resources to do their job,
- Provide an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns,
- Ensure the quality of service provided to children and families,

Employees are encouraged to reflect on the quality of their practice, continually update their knowledge base and raise any safeguarding concerns.

Supervision and Support sessions - if an issue arises, the related policy and forms for documenting will be availed of. Otherwise, these sessions are of a verbal nature and not documented. There is also a Probationary Period form and a Performance Review form, which will be completed when needed.

Performance and Review Policy and Procedures

Clare County Childcare strives to achieve high standards of performance and service at all times. It is our policy to train and support all employees to carry out their roles to a high standard and to the best of their ability. Please see the Clare CCC Performance and Review Policy and Procedures

Clare County Childcare has designed a performance review process that aims to promote reflection and explore well aligned growth avenues for each employee. This process is an opportunity for an employee to take the lead on their professional career goals, to identify strengths, celebrate achievements and alongside management identify areas that need

focus in order to improve as an individual as well as contribute to Clare County Childcare's service to its communities and all its stakeholders.

Clare County Childcare is strongly committed to this process and emphasise the importance of providing feedback and supporting employees to raise performance standards.

All employees can expect to have ongoing performance conversations and receive timely and balanced feedback on their performance. Employees will be supported to achieve the required high standard of work.

Probation

All new employees will serve a probationary period of 6 months. The probationary period may be extended at the Clare CCC discretion. Clare CCC reserves the right to terminate your employment either during or at the end of this probationary period at its discretion. Please see the Probation Policy for further details re same.

Complaints Procedure

Clare CCC has a complaints procedure which outlines how to make and receive complaints about any aspect of the organisation. This procedure is available on request via the public forum of the Clare CCC website. Please refer to the full policy document.

Clare CCC is committed to providing a high-quality service to all our customers. Clare CCC views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve on our services for the future. Our policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly, promptly and confidentially.
- Handle all complaint information sensitively while adhering to relevant data protection and child protection legislation (Exception: if complaint contains information that indicates a direct danger to a child/children, it will be given priority and dealt with immediately. During this process the CCC will refer the complaint directly to Tusla (Child & Family Agency) and/or local An Garda Síochána, in line with Clare County Childcare Committee's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do.
- Evaluate and learn from complaints and use them to review and improve our services.
- Ensure complainant information and data is communicated, recorded and stored in line with our own internal operating procedures and GDPR policy.

How to make a complaint?

All correspondence is dealt with confidentially but cannot be submitted anonymously.

A complaint about services provided by the County Childcare Committee should be directed to the Clare CCC manager, who will endeavour to deal with the complaint without delay.

Customers can make a complaint in the following ways:

- Visiting CCC office – Clare CCC, 1 Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare, V95CXP1
- Contact by phone – 065 6864862
- Correspondence by email – info@clarechildcare.ie or post – Clare CCC, 1 Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare, V95CXP1
- Completing the Concern/Complaint template form which can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of the Clare CCC Complaint Policy document.

Customers who wish to make a complaint in relation to the Early Learning and Care and/or School Age Childcare sector, Clare CCC will try to assist you in finding a resolution with the service/ agency if possible and/or signpost you to the relevant agency to escalate your complaint further.

Response time to your Complaint:

- We will acknowledge receipt of any communications within 3 working days.
- We will investigate all complaints and will ensure that a substantive reply will follow within 15 working days of initial receipt.
- Where this is not possible to answer your query within these timeframes, we will communicate with you to keep you advised of our progress.

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary policy of Clare CCC is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct, job performance and attendance. The disciplinary policy aims to help employees whose performance, attendance or conduct falls below company requirements to achieve the necessary improvement. Formal procedures are vital to ensure consistent and fair disciplinary action at all times. This procedure was written in the light of the requirements of the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977-2015.

Employee Rights:

Clare CCC undertakes to follow a fair and consistent procedure in relation to the application of the disciplinary policy. At all stages of the procedure the principles of natural justice and fairness will apply. At each stage of the disciplinary procedure, employees will have the right to:

- Be informed of the complaint against them and be given sufficient opportunity to present their case and call witnesses to support their case, as appropriate.
- Be accompanied to disciplinary meetings by a representative (this can be in the form of a trade union representative, fellow employee or friend).
- Be normally not dismissed for a first offence, other than gross misconduct.

- Be informed and encouraged to use the right of appeal.
- The Company reserves the right to skip stages of the disciplinary procedure depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

Procedure

The Company reserves the right to take disciplinary action on the basis of:

- A breach of a contractual or established work rule.
- Poor performance.
- Capability issues.
- Misconduct.
- Gross misconduct.
- High levels of absence.

The above includes but is not restricted to when there is an alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour and when there is an allegation of abuse made against a worker.

Please refer to the full policy in the Employee Handbook.

Sharing Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures with Stakeholders

Clare CCC will make their guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures available to all stakeholders via the public platform of our website, and as part of the induction process for all workers.

Stakeholders will be guided on how they can make complaints if they are dissatisfied with the service that is being provided. A complaints procedure is in place and is available on request via the public platform of our website.

Stakeholders include the following, but are not limited to:

- Clare CCC Workers
- ELC & SAC services in Clare.
- Parent & Toddler groups in Clare.
- Parents of children attending ELC & SAC services
- Local Agencies
- ELC & SAC Students
- Children & Families attending any events organised by Clare CCC

Procedure for Maintaining a List of the Persons (if any) in the Relevant Service who are Mandated Persons

Workers at Clare CCC are not Mandated Persons as per the Children First Act 2015. However a procedure is in place if there ever is a Mandated person employed by Clare CCC. The Manager will be responsible for creating this list and maintaining the list when a Mandated Person is employed or leaves their employment. This list will be kept in the Child Safeguarding Files stored on the shared drive.

The manager will consult Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 to determine which staff are mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015. It may, in some instances, be necessary to seek legal advice in this regard.

- The list will be made available upon request.
- The Manager is responsible for consulting with staff to review the mandated persons list to remove persons who are not classified as mandated persons or persons who have left the service.
- Those who are identified as mandated persons must be notified of such and informed of their roles and responsibilities by the Manager.
- Mandated persons should be directed to specific provision in the service's reporting procedure which provides for reporting under Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015.
- Mandated persons must also be directed to specific provision in the service's reporting procedure which provides for mandated assisting.
- Appropriate training will be provided for mandated persons.
- Mandated persons have a responsibility to inform employers when they are fulfilling their legal responsibilities in relation to mandated reports and mandated assisting.
- The procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if there is a material change to legislation and/or policy.

As Clare CCC Workers are not mandated persons, therefore there is currently no procedure in place for reporting as a Mandated Person or detail re requirements for Mandated Assisting. If a Mandated person was employed as a Clare CCC worker the reporting procedure will be updated to account for this. As is legally required there is a procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons, as stated above.

7. Implementing, Monitoring and Reviewing Child Safeguarding Procedures

Clare CCC will continue to develop ongoing plans to implement, monitor and review our child safeguarding procedures and will ensure that they are adhered to.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Your Child Safeguarding Policy

Implement

Once procedures are developed, they will be implemented with immediate effect. An Implementation plan will be developed by the named person (Yvonne Broderick) with

the support of the staff team. Individual staff members have a responsibility for implementation of the plan.

Monitor

Clare CCC's child safeguarding procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis. This is part of the role of the named person (Yvonne Broderick).

Review

Child safeguarding procedures will be reviewed, at a minimum every two years or more often where required. This review will be led by the named person (Yvonne Broderick) and will involve the whole staff team. Reviews will be conducted when procedures have been put into practice and gaps have been identified, situations where the scope or purpose of the CCC has changed or new legislation or policy has been developed.

When reviewing the Clare CCC Child Safeguarding Procedures – please note other relevant policies, such as those included below, may also need to be updated:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Induction
- Confidentiality
- Support & Supervision
- Complaints

The Employee Handbook & any Board Induction materials, may also need to be reviewed in line with any changes.

Appendix 1 – Types of Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- **Neglect**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**

Neglect:

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences. Neglect is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties.

A **reasonable concern** for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A **reasonable concern** for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

The following are features of Emotional Abuse:

- Rejection, Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom) Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents.

A **reasonable concern** exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

The following are features of Physical Abuse:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing, pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling

- Deliberate poisoning, suffocation, fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members. Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

The following are features of Sexual Abuse:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
 - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse.

- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

Appendix 2 – Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse from a Child

- Be as calm and natural as possible
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child
- Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to
- Do not pressurise the child. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief
- Accept what the child has to say – false disclosures are very rare
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement of, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking with the child
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Explain to the child that this information will only be shared with people who can help

Appendix 3 – Contact Details

Duty Social Worker Team - Clare

Tel: 061 588688 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday

If you cannot contact Tusla and have an immediate concern about the safety of a child, please contact An Garda Síochána.

Local Dedicated Contact Point (DCP) - <https://www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/duty-social-work-teams/>

Local Garda Station Contact Details - <https://www.garda.ie/en/contact-us/station-directory/> (999 number in case of emergency)

Making a Mandated Report Out of Hours

Out-of-hours social work service, Tel: 0818 776 315 between 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

Counselling Services for Adults

National Adult Counselling Services – over 18 experienced abuse as a child.

Tel: HSE West 1800 234 115 (office hours), Free & Face to Face.

CONNECT, Tel: 1800 477 477 (Wed. – Sun. 6pm – 10pm) (For survivors of abuse & also for partners and relatives) See www.connectcounselling.ie, via phone and free.

Appendix 4:

**Child Safeguarding
Self-Declaration Form**



You must sign and date this declaration below.

Declaration: I declare that there is no reason why I would not be considered suitable to work with children or young people.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5:

Child Safeguarding Policy Declaration Form



This declaration should be completed by all staff, chairperson, volunteers and students, once they have read and understood the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Name (block capitals):

Address:

Position

I have received a copy of the Clare County Childcare Committee's Child Safeguarding Policy. I have read and understand the particulars outlined and I agree to follow the guidelines on procedures and practices contained within it.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This declaration must be signed and returned to Yvonne Broderick, Manager, Clare County Childcare Committee, 1 Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.