

Youth Ballet West

Child Protection & Welfare Policy and Procedures

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CHILD PROTECTION, SAFEGUARDING, SAFEGAURDING AND WELFARE POLICY STATEMENT

The following policy is the statement of Youth Ballet West on child protection, safeguarding and welfare. This policy replaces and supersedes all and any policies issued by Youth Ballet West to date in relation to the children who attend or visitors to classes and activities with Youth Ballet West.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles of good practice for the protection and safeguarding of children and young people, to enable Youth Ballet West to ensure the safety and welfare of children / young people with whom it interacts, and to provide a safe environment, enabling children to learn and develop with understanding and encouragement.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff and all members of Youth Ballet West regardless of nationality, ethnic origin, cultural difference, socio-economic background, gender, etc., whether on the premises or off site at productions etc.

Wherever 'children' or 'young people' are mentioned in this document, the policy is intended to refer to both.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Statement will be available to all staff, boards of management, primary carers, children and young people involved in the organisation.

Child Protection, Safeguarding and Welfare Policy Statement

Youth Ballet West acknowledges the rights of children to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration. We adopt a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We recognise that the welfare of children must always come first, regardless of all other considerations. We are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all the children and young people with whom we work, and in full compliance with Children First and Our Duty to Care. We are committed to a coordinated and inter-agency approach to ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is paramount in all we do.

We do this by:

- Giving parents, children and workers information about what we do and what you expect from us.
- Making sure that our staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Letting parents and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about.

To this end the organisation has implemented policies and procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff, employee's and students
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Managing and supervising staff
- Involvement of primary carers
- Staff allegations
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

As part of the policy, Youth Ballet West will:

- Appoint a Designated Liaison Persons for dealing with child protection, safeguarding concerns and a Deputy Designated Liaison Person.
- Provide induction training on the Child Protection, Safeguarding and Welfare Policy to all staff and students.
- Ensure staff attend child protection, safeguarding training as appropriate.
- Provide supervision and support for all personnel in contact with children
- Share information about the Child Protection, Safeguarding and Welfare Policy with families and children.
- Share this policy with parents on enrolment for classes
- Review this policy each time an incident is reported or every year if that is sooner.
- Work and cooperate with the relevant statutory agencies as required.

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY

Youth Ballet West will ensure that all employees:

- Are aware of their responsibilities and their obligations under Children First
- Are aware of their responsibility for reporting and concerns and /or Incidents regarding the safety or wellbeing of children to the Designated Liaison Person.
- Attend child protection, safeguarding training as appropriate.

The following is a general breakdown of Youth Ballet West's personnel and structures

Directors

The directors are responsible for the running of Youth Ballet West. It is their responsibility to ensure that the rules and policies of Youth Ballet West are upheld as they fall within his/her duties.

Instructors

The role of instructors includes the supervision of students in a manner compliant with the rules and policies of Youth Ballet West, and carrying out the functions required for the wellbeing and safety of the students and the goals of the group of which they are part.

Visitors

A visitor to Youth Ballet West is someone who is not normally part of the functioning of Youth Ballet West. Visitors under the age of 18 years will be treated as students or service users for the duration of their stay.

Designated Liaison Person

The role of the Designated Liaison Person is to promote awareness of Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in Youth Ballet West among students and parents/guardians. They shall influence policy and practice within Youth Ballet West in order to prioritise children's needs and ensure that the children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies. They will encourage appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in Youth Ballet West and also act as an advisory resource to employees on best practice. The Designated Liaison Person shall ensure the children have a voice in policies that affect them.

GOOD PRACTICE

Safe practice is essential in our work and we have put in place the following procedure to govern our work with children and young people.

- Each child/young person will be registered on joining and the following details will be kept on file:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - Special requirements

- Medical conditions / allergies / special needs etc.
- Emergency contact details (name, phone number / mobile number etc.)
- Records will be kept of:
 - Attendance
 - Accidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to senior management)
 - Consents given for various activities
 - Any complaints or grievances
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved, and observe appropriate gender balance in supervision for overnight stays / residential.
- If activities involve travel and/or overnight stays away from home, attention should be paid to the following:
 - Safe methods of transport
 - Adequate insurance to cover all aspects of the trip
 - Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
 - Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets
- The following should be requested for each child attending events / meetings / residential stays outside of normal weekly classes:
 - A Parental Consent Form – particularly for events involving long distance travel or overnight stays (see Appendix 1)
 - Contact details for the family / guardians, including emergency contact numbers
 - Any information about the children which may be relevant to staying away overnight, e.g. allergies, medical problems or special needs which the young person may have in terms of access, diet, language assistance, etc.
- Ensure children are never left unattended. Staff should know at all times where children are and what they are doing.
- Primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators should be given written information about the organisation and be made aware of the Child Protection, safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Primary carers will be informed of any issues that concern their children
- Children and young people are encouraged to report any bullying, concerns or worries to the Designated Liaison Person or a worker of their choice, and to be aware of anti-bullying policy. Complaints must be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person.
- Any concerns about a child's welfare should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person using the Reporting Procedures in this document
- Staff should avoid taking a session on their own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers
- When dealing with challenging or disruptive behaviour, it is recommended that
 - More than one staff member is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
 - An Incident / Accident Form should be completed describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property, and how the situation was resolved.

The policy will be reviewed annually in October each year. The next review date is **01/10/2019**

Signed: _____ Date: _____

ROLE OF DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

Children First requires that every organisation providing services to children appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for reporting neglect or abuse. The DLP is responsible for dealing with child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with Children First and Our Duty to Care.

A deputy DLP will be appointed to undertake the below duties when the DLP is on leave or is unavailable for a long time.

Designated Liaison Person: Judith Sibley
 Phone Number: 091 799703
 Mobile: 087 7970339

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Phyllis Hayes
 Phone Number: 091 799703
 Mobile: 087 2456945

The role of DLP is to:

- Provide information and advice on child protection and welfare concerns and issues to the staff of the service.
- Be accessible to all staff.
- Ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments.
- Ensure that they Child Protection and Welfare Policy and procedures of the service are followed.
- Be responsible for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of children to TUSLA - Child & Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána.
- Ensure that appropriate information is included in the report to TUSLA - Child & Family Agency and that the report is submitted in writing (under confidential cover) using the Standard Report form (see Appendix (i))
- Liaise with TUSLA - Child & Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people within the organisation informed of relevant issues, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the service, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
- Advise the organisation of child protection training needs.
- Maintain a central log or record of all child protection and welfare concerns in the service.

STAFF CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Youth Ballet West staff will at all times observe the Code of Conduct and Professional Practice for Teachers registered with the Royal Academy of Dance. This document is displayed at Reception.

Youth Ballet West Staff will observe appropriate dress code and behave courteously and responsibly at all times, and aim to lead by example and be an excellent role model for children / young people. The following procedures should be followed at all times:

GOOD PRACTICE

Safe practise is essential in our work and we have put in place the following procedure to govern our work with children and young people.

- Each child/young person will be registered on joining and the following details will be kept on file:
 - Name

- Address
- Phone number
- Special requirements
- Medical conditions / allergies / special needs etc.
- Emergency contact details (name, phone number / mobile number etc.)
- Records will be kept of:

Student' addresses and telephone numbers are to be kept strictly confidential. Under no circumstances is anyone to be given these addresses or numbers unless requested to do so by the appropriate authorities, e.g., An Garda Síochána or TUSLA - Child and Family Agency

 - Attendance
 - Accidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to senior management)
 - Consents given for various activities
 - Any complaints or grievances
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved, and observe appropriate gender balance in supervision for overnight stays / residential.
- If activities involve travel and/or overnight stays away from home, attention should be paid to the following:
 - Safe methods of transport
 - Adequate insurance to cover all aspects of the trip
 - Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
 - Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets
- The following should be requested for each child attending events / meetings / residential stays outside of normal weekly classes:
 - A Parental Consent Form – particularly for events involving long distance travel or overnight stays (see Appendix 1)
 - Contact details for the family / guardians, including emergency contact numbers
 - Any information about the children which may be relevant to staying away overnight, e.g. allergies, medical problems or special needs which the young person may have in terms of access, diet, language assistance, etc.
- Ensure children are never left unattended. Staff should know at all times where children are and what they are doing.
- Primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators should be given written information about the organisation and be made aware of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Primary carers will be informed of any issues that concern their children
- Children and young people are encouraged to report any bullying, concerns or worries to the Designated Liaison Person or a worker of their choice, and to be aware of anti-bullying policy. Complaints must be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person.
- Any concerns about a child's welfare should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person using the Reporting Procedures in this document
- Staff should avoid taking a session on their own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers
- When dealing with challenging or disruptive behaviour, it is recommended that

- More than one staff member is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
- An Incident / Accident Form should be completed describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property, and how the situation was resolved.

Child Centred Approach

Individual workers have a responsibility to protect and promote children's rights as follows:

- Treat all children/young persons with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
- Make time to listen, talk to and get to know the children and young people
- Make sure that children know the organisation's rules about behaviour
- Encourage children to have an input into how things are run and involve them in decision-making as appropriate
- Create an atmosphere of trust, help children to be safe, happy and have as much fun as possible
- Never favour one child or children over others
- Encourage them to express feelings, fears and experiences openly
- Know about the principles and practices of child protection including legal duties
- Respect children's privacy in bathrooms or changing rooms
- Sensitively ensure that children know about the child protection policy
- Always respond promptly to complaints or allegations
- Help children realise the difference between confidentiality and secrecy
- Be sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs
- Treat all children and young people equally, respecting differences of ability, culture, religion, race, gender and sexual orientation etc.
- Recognise the various talents of members and develop those talents accordingly, encouraging and enhancing the different talent of each individual member.
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability), and give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers

Inappropriate Behaviour

- Workers should never be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they even tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- Never engage in sexually provocative games or make suggestive comments, even in fun. Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Refrain from smoking, drinking alcohol, swearing or engaging in an inappropriate level of conversation.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people
- No unnecessary physical contact between and adult and a child/young person, although there are times when for example, placing a hand on a distressed child/young person's shoulder to comfort him/her would be appropriate. Physical contact should only be in response to the needs of the child and should be appropriate to the age and level of development of the child.

- Workers will avoid doing things of a personal nature that children could do for themselves. If assistance is required by the child, a second adult should be present.
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person, and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed. Please refer to the Safety Risk Assessment for further detail.

Physical contact

During ballet class, physical contact occurs for correctional purposes, and staff will ensure that any form of physical interaction is appropriate to the situation and never takes place against a child/young person's will.

- Never physically punish a child.
- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.
- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation)
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- In the case of a child being sick, two workers must be present with them at all times.

Health and Safety

Youth Ballet West is committed to providing a safe environment for all children / young persons with whom it interacts.

- All Staff are required to
 - Read and comply with the company Safety Statement and associated documents.
 - Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly
 - Be aware of emergency and evacuation procedures and follow accordingly
- Never leave children unattended or unsupervised
- When working on a one to one basis with a child or young person, workers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with an individual child /young person.
- Where an adult needs to meet with a child /young person alone, the door should be left open and another adult informed of the meeting.
- Ensure that buildings are safe and met required standards.
- Ensure that there is sufficient heating and ventilation
- Ensure toilets and changing areas are up to standard

One to One Work

Workers and volunteers are not to be in a situation where they are on their own with a child for any extended period of time. Unless Garda vetting has been completed and cleared, workers will not be permitted to work on a one to one basis.

Use of Mobile Phones and Technology

Photography is prohibited in Youth Ballet West. Photographs taken at Youth Ballet West, or in connect with the work of Youth Ballet West where children are involved, cannot be used publicly without the express permission of the organisation and the permission of the child's parent/guardian.

It is recommended that workers do not give students their details or those of other workers. This includes phone numbers, email addresses and social media details. A student must never be allowed to access a worker's mobile phone.

Youth Ballet West accepts that workers and volunteers use social media sites to communicate with peers and recommends that the privacy policy of such website are read and full use if made of the protection features which are available.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures and involves:

- Always applying thorough selection procedures, no matter who the applicant happens to be
- Judging the suitability of applicants in relation to a broad range of matters
- Taking all reasonable steps to eliminate people who are not suitable for working with children
- Providing training

Youth Ballet West's recruitment and selection procedures are formulated to ensure – as far as possible – the safety and protection of children and young people, and are drawn up in line with current Equal Opportunities legislation. We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people by observing the following principles:

- Posts will be advertised widely and openly available to interested applicants
- Applicants must submit applications in writing to include the following:
 - Personal details
 - Past and current work experience
 - Qualifications or skills relevant to the post
 - Documentation to confirm identity of applicant (i.e. long version of birth cert, together with driving licence or passport with signature and photograph)
- All applicants will be required to provide the names of at least 2 referees (not family members) who will testify as to their character, their suitability to the role of employee, confirming that the person is known to the referee and is considered suitable by them to work with young people. All references should be provided in writing and verbally confirmed.
- All applicants will be required to sign a Declaration Form stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with young people, and declaring any past criminal convictions or cases pending against them.
- All applicants will be required to consent to Garda Vetting through the National Vetting Bureau, and where available this will be sought prior to employment
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed. Some of the exclusions would include:
 - any child-related convictions
 - refusal to sign application form and declaration form
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification
 - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children

- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process
- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job
- Employment will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months. This probationary period may be extended at the discretion of management, but will not in any case exceed 11 months.

Personnel File

An up to date and accurate personnel file is kept for each member of staff that includes the following records:

- Proof of identity and that the person is over 18 years of age.
- Proof of satisfactory Garda Vetting.
- Two valid references, including a reference from the most recent place of employment.
- Verification of qualifications
- Investigation of any gaps in employment.

Training and Induction of Workers

- All workers, both new and experienced should be given an induction session regarding the mission of Youth Ballet West, as well as training on Youth Ballet West Child Protection and Welfare Policy.

Visitors

- Any and all visitors must make themselves known upon entering Youth Ballet West premises.
- Any and all visitors must be escorted around the premises as the need arises while children are on the premises.
- Visitors with any criminal convictions or pending cases involving children or the sale and /or distribution of illegal drugs should not be permitted on the premises at any time.
- Suppliers, trades and repair/maintenance personnel must be accompanied as the need arises while children are on the premises.

RECOGNISING, RESPONDING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending a TUSLA - Child & Family Agency intervention. In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.

If the child has made a disclosure, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.

If there are reasonable grounds for concern (see Appendix (v)) the DLP will complete the Standard Report Form without delay and send it to the Duty Social Work Team in TUSLA - Child & Family Agency (see below for contact details).

Duty Social Work Team, TUSLA – Child & Family Agency

Child and Family Agency, Galway Social Work Department, Galway City Social Work Department, Local Health office 25 Newcastle Rd, Galway 091 546366

An Garda Síochána

Garda Station, Mill Street, Galway 091 538 016

- If the concern is urgent and the child is in immediate danger, the report to TUSLA – Child & Family Agency will be made by Telephone and followed up with the completed Standard Report Form.
- In the event of an emergency and unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.
- The DLP may use the process of informal consultation with the Duty Social Work Team to discuss the response to a child protection and welfare concern and whether or not it warrants reasonable grounds for concern. Information consultation is carried out without providing the name of the family or the child. If advised to do so, a formal report will be made.
- The DLP will record information above the concern, information conclusion (if carried out) and details regarding if and when the parents were informed.

Procedure when a referral is not made to TUSLA - Child & Family agency

- Not all concerns will meet the reasonable grounds for concern. In this case, the concern and any informal consultation will be documented and kept confidential and secure.
- The DLP will inform the member of staff, volunteer or student who raised the concern that it is not being referred in writing, indicating the reasons. The DLP will advise the individual that they may make a report themselves or contact the Duty Social Work Team and that the provision of the *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998* will apply. The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides protection from civil liability and penalisation by an employer where reports made to designated officers in the HSE or to An Garda Síochána are reasonable and in good faith.

Grounds for Concern

The following excerpt from *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (4.3.2 – p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
- an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse (an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour);
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Responsibility

The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously. It is important to note that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is the responsibility of the HSE or An Garda Síochána. Under no circumstances should any individual staff member attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse may be summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority
- Reports should be made without delay
- The principles of natural justice should apply, which means that a person is innocent until proven otherwise
- The principle of confidentiality should apply, whereby only those that need to know should be told of a suspicion/allegation/disclosure of abuse and the number that need to be kept informed should be kept to a minimum.

Recording Procedures

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people and discuss with the Designated Liaison Person:

- Suspicions
- Concerns
- Worrying observations
- Behavioural changes
- Actions and outcomes

These records will be entered in an Incident / Accident Form by the Managing Director and kept in a secure and confidential manner.

Dealing with a disclosure

If a child hints at or tells a member of staff that he or she is being abused, it must be handled sensitively and in the following way:

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say.
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details.
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret.
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily.
- Don't make any judgemental statements.
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (the explanation should be age-appropriate).
- Record all information.

The information should then be passed on according to the Reporting Procedures below.

Reporting Procedures

A staff member who knows or suspects that a young person has been or is at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey this concern to The Managing Director or The Artistic Director who will report the information to the Children and Family Agency (CFA) immediately. In the event of non-availability of the CFA the DLP reports to An Garda Síochána. Where the DLP is unsure whether or not a report should be made, they shall seek advice from the Children and Family Agency immediately.

The following reporting procedures should be followed for matters relating to a child/young person's safety and welfare:

- All details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts of the disclosure should be recorded and passed on to the Designated Liaison Person, Judith Sibley, or Phyllis Hayes if

Judith is unavailable. Information recorded should be factual, and any opinions should be supported by facts. Actions and outcomes should be noted. Details should be recorded on the Incident / Accident Form.

- If either Phyllis Hayes or Judith Sibley is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly (see contact details below).
- The Designated Liaison Person will discuss the concern or consult with the primary carers.
- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed.
- If the Designated Liaison Person decides that reasonable grounds for reporting the incident or suspicion to the HSE or An Garda Síochána do not exist, the individual worker who referred the matter should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation is not taking action.
- The worker should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the HSE or An Garda Síochána themselves. The provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 apply once the report is made “reasonably and in good faith”.
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, The Designated Liaison Person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive without delay

Address: Community Care Services, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway

Phone Numbers: 091 546366, 091 546325

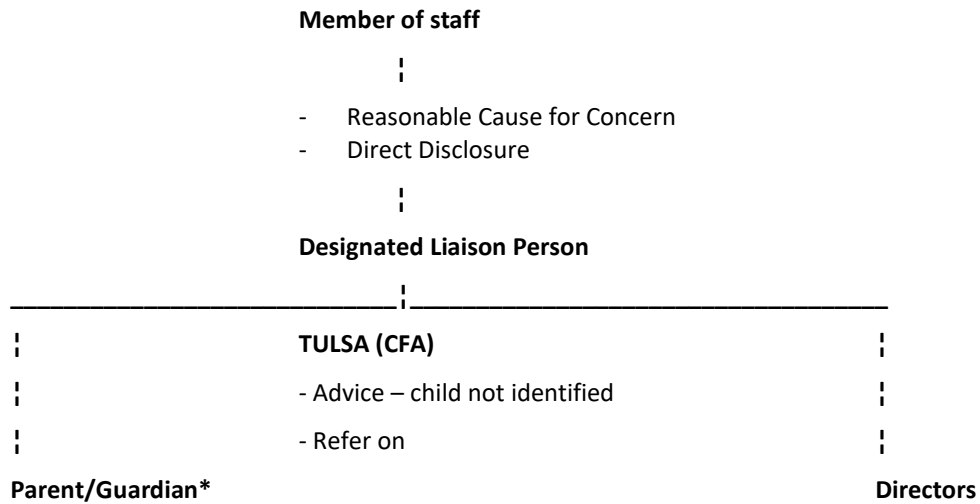
Fax Numbers: 091 527601, 091 524231

- The Designated Liaison Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report.
- Information will be shared on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis (see Confidentiality Statement).
- Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive (see Appendix 1).
- It is generally most helpful if persons wishing to report child abuse concerns make personal contact with the Duty Social Worker. This will facilitate the social worker in gathering as much information as possible about the child and his or her situation. If a third person makes the report, it is likely that the social worker will wish to speak to the person who first witnessed the incident, received the disclosure, or felt the concern.
- Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk.
- Once reported the CFA are required to provide advice, if sought request to discuss with more senior member of staff may be made; CFA have a responsibility to inform persons reporting alleged child abuse about outcome of any inquiry or investigation into reported concern ; CFA should provide feedback to employee on progress of child abuse investigation involving an employee...as quickly as possible
- In case of emergencies outside of CFA hours, contact the Gardaí at any Garda Station. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/ young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí without delay. Under no circumstances should a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending the intervention of the CFA.

Office of the Chief Superintendent
An Garda Síochána,
Mill Street,
Galway.

Telephone	(091) 538011
E-mail	gsgalwaydiv@iol.ie
Fax	(091) 538081
Garda Website	www.garda.ie

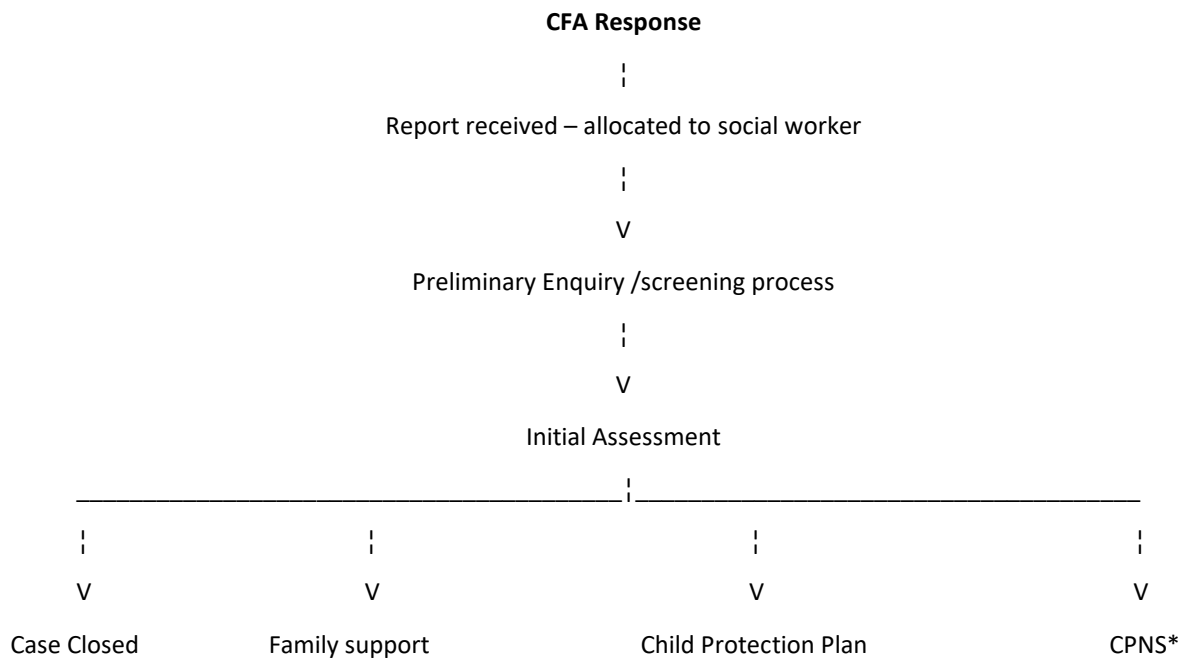
Route of Referral



**DLP should inform a parent/carer unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk.*

Where a child changes organisation and where the DLP is aware that a child protection report relating to that child has been made to the CFA in the past, the DLP should inform the CFA of the child’s transfer/move.

TULSA (CFA) Response



*Child protection Notification System

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

In the event of allegations being made against an employee (staff, freelance, or voluntary), the protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration. Youth Ballet West understands that it has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and employee. There are therefore two separate procedures to be followed:

1. The Artistic Director (Judith Sibley) will have responsibility for dealing with the child/young person welfare issues.
 2. The Managing Director (Phyllis Hayes) will deal with issues related to the staff member against whom the allegation is made.
- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk. In any case of an allegation against an employee, Youth Ballet West will take protective measures appropriate to the level of risk while not unreasonably penalising the worker – unless necessary to protect the child/young person. Protective measures might mean increased supervision, assignment to different duties, or suspension with pay pending investigation.
 - The Designated Liaison Person (Judith Sibley) should be informed as soon as possible.
 - If allegations are made against the Designated Liaison Person (Judith Sibley), then the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Phyllis Hayes) should be contacted.
 - An allegation against an employee should be assessed promptly and carefully. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a formal report to the Health Service Executive should be made. The reporting procedures outlined in this document should be followed. The organisation should maintain a close liaison with the Health Service Executive and the Gardaí.
 - Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner.
 - The Designated Liaison Person should refer the matter to the HSE as soon as possible, who will in turn notify the Garda Síochána. Youth Ballet West will be sensitive to the fact that those with a need to know should be restricted to a minimum.
 - Measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following:
 - Suspension of duties of the person accused.
 - Re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children / young people.
 - Working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation
 - Other measures as deemed appropriate.
 - When the Designated Liaison Person becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child by an employee during the execution of that employee's duties, the Designated Liaison Person will privately inform the employee of the following:
 - The fact that the allegation has been made
 - The nature of the allegation.

The employee will be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Designated Liaison Person will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to the HSE.

- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí. No member of staff should attempt to deal with an allegation against a staff member on their own.
- After consultation, the Designated Liaison Person should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.
- Where a claim is upheld, the staff member will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern (from Children First):

- A specific indication from a child that he / she was abused.
- A statement from a person who witnessed the abuse.
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
- A symptom, which may not in itself, be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or neglect.
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

Under no circumstances should an individual member of staff or volunteer attempt to confront the person who has been accused. Proper procedures should be followed at all times. A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective signs of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion.

As soon as possible after the disclosure, the following should be written down:

Records

- Where and when the disclosure took place and the background to how the disclosure came about.
- Relationship of the reporter to the child making the disclosure.
- What the child said, using their words as much as possible.
- How the child behaved while talking about the events.
- The feelings expressed by the child.
- Any signs of physical injury should be described.
- Relevant dates and times etc. given by the child.

The record should be as factual as possible and personal opinions or interpretations of what has happened should be avoided. In order to be as accurate as possible, no one other than the person who heard the allegation should be involved in writing the report.

The following details should be included in the report:

1. Name, address and age of the minor(s) for whom the report is being made.
2. Name, address, contact number and occupation of the reporter.
3. The names and addresses of the parents / carers of the child or children.
4. The name, address and details of the person allegedly causing concern in relation to the minor.

The record should be signed and dated by the reporter and witnessed by the Chairperson.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides protection from civil liability and penalisation by an employer where reports made to designated officers in the HSE or to An Garda Síochána are reasonable and in good faith. Designated officers include the following persons:

- Social Workers
- Child Care Workers
- Public Health Nurses
- Hospital Consultants
- Psychiatrists
- Hospital Doctors
- Community Welfare Officers
- Psychologists
- Health Promotion Officers
- Substance Abuse Counsellors

- Care Assistants

Parents and Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees

- Parents have the right to contact TULSA – Child and Family Agency to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about the employee or Youth Ballet West.
- Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be kept informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.
- If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed, their parents will be informed immediately.

Record Keeping

Up to date and accurate records in relation to children, staff and service provision must be kept.

Parents may have access to the files and records of their own children on request but may not have access to information about any other child.

Only employee involved with a particular child will have access to confidential files.

The DLP, Deputy DLP and Administrator are the only persons who have access to these records:

- Any complaints about the safety and welfare of children/ young persons while engaged with Youth Ballet West.
- Any disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse.
- The follow up to any complaints, disclosure, concerns or allegations, including information advice from the HSE, reports to the HSE and information parents / guardians.
- Any bullying complaints related to Youth Ballet West work with children /young peoples and the follow up action.
- Signed acceptance forms from Youth Ballet West Child Protection and Welfare Policy by Staff, volunteers and any workers.
- All Garda Vetting forms.
- All parental / guardian consent forms.

All confidential information related to a child must be securely stored indefinitely. Information not relating to the child should be destroyed and disposed of appropriately. All records are managed in line the Data Protection Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

We in Youth Ballet West are committed to ensuring individuals' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk
- Any information provided to the HSE or An Garda Síochána will remain confidential. Those receiving such information will only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate 'need to know'.
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances)

- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children / young people
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.
- All records and the Incident / Accident Forms will be kept in a secure database or locked cabinet.

STAFF MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION POLICY STATEMENT

To protect both staff (paid, freelance and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that new staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session
- Be made aware of the organisation's Code of Conduct, Child Protection Procedures, and the identity and role of the person who has been designated to deal with issues of concern
- Undergo a probationary period of 6 months

We further undertake that all staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices
- Be required to read the Child Protection Policy Statement
- Be required to sign the Acceptance and Declaration Form attached to the Policy (See Appendix 3)
- Be required to read and sign the Safety Statement and associated documents
- Be provided with child protection training appropriate to their level of contact with children / young persons
- Be given the opportunity to discuss concerns and training needs.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF PRIMARY CARERS

Youth Ballet West has a policy of openness with all primary carers (parents, carers or responsible adults) that involves consulting them about everything that concerns their children, and encouraging them to get involved with the organisation wherever possible.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant, i.e. for attendance at performances, overnight stays etc.
- Comply with health and safety practices
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate

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

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person

- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children
- Have a Designated Liaison Person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS PROCEDURE

Youth Ballet West is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children/young people with whom we work. We also try to ensure that children/young people have a positive and enjoyable experience when working with the Youth Ballet West.

This complaints procedure aims to cover any situation which may arise when children or their parents/guardians are not happy with the way the children were treated while they were in the Youth Ballet West, or at an event/activity run by the Youth Ballet West.

- If the complaint is in relation to the safety and welfare of children/young people the complaint should be made to Judith Sibley.
- Other complaints should be made to the person with whom the child/young person dealt with, or if you prefer, you can make this complaint directly to Judith Sibley.

Both verbal and written complaints or comments will be recorded on an Incident / Accident Form and responded to within 20 working days where possible (see below).

Who can make a complaint

Complaints can be made by:

- Children/young people involved with the Youth Ballet West
- Their parents/guardians
- Other advocates on behalf of children/young people.

Information you need to provide

Complaints can be made orally or in writing. By providing the following information you can help to speed up the investigation of your complaint.

- The name and address of the child/young person affected
- If the complaint is being made by a parent/guardian or other adult, the name and address of the parent/guardian or other adult

- Exactly what you are dissatisfied with
- The name of the staff member(s) who dealt with you.
- If your complaint is complicated, you may find it best to put it in writing so that no important detail is overlooked. Remember to send us copies of all relevant documentation / correspondence that you may have.
- If you have special needs that may affect your ability to make a complaint, please let us know at the earliest opportunity. We will make every effort to assist you.

Our standards for dealing with complaints

- If the complaint relates to the safety and welfare of a child/young person, it will be examined in accordance with good practice in relation to the safety and welfare of children/young people
- We will treat your complaint properly, fairly and impartially and in the best interests of the child/young person
- We promise that making a complaint will have no implications for your dealings with the Youth Ballet West.
- A staff member other than those originally involved will examine your complaint
- We will examine and review your complaint and send a reply to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint. Where it is not possible to meet this target, we will inform you and continue to do so until the matter is resolved
- We will apologise for any mistreatment of the child/young person, explain what happened and put it right wherever possible
- We will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in future.

Appeal

If you are unhappy about the outcome of the review you can appeal the matter to Judith Sibley or Phyllis Hayes within a month of the review.

ACCIDENTS PROCEDURE

- Youth Ballet West will maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation.
- Children/young people's details must be cross-referenced between the Incident / Accident Form and file.
- External organisations with whom Youth Ballet West has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance.
- The First-Aid Box is kept in the Kitchen.
- A First Aid Box will be brought on off-site trips and replenished after each production.
- Accident / Incident Forms and Books are kept at Reception.
- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous materials
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk

The objective of the Youth Ballet West is that no employee / member should be subjected to any preventable injury, no matter how slight the consequences may be. Therefore it is important that all accidents and incidents, with potential for injury which occur, are reported to The Managing Director.

Following any accident on the premises, if there is a first aider on the premises they will administer first aid, if deemed necessary. If additional medical assistance is required arrangements will be made for the injured person to be brought to a GP or to Casualty.

In the event of an accident involving one of the members, the member's parents will be notified immediately regardless of whether treatment other than first aid is required. An up-to-date contact list must be available to the Managing Director at all times. Parents must be advised to provide any changes to their contact details to the Managing Director.

In the event of a child requiring additional treatment, employees are not advised to drive a lone member to the G.P. or to Casualty. If a parent is not available, it may be necessary for one of the employees and three members, including the injured member, to go to the G.P. or to Casualty. This will ensure that a situation in which a member is left alone with an adult is avoided.

Following any accident or dangerous occurrence the Managing Director is responsible for carrying out a detailed investigation and ensuring that suitable remedial actions are identified and implemented to prevent a recurrence. An Accident Report Form will be completed for all accidents on site. Accident Forms should be filed when all remedial actions have been completed and they should be reviewed regularly to check if particular employees/members appear more 'prone' to accidents or whether certain tasks/locations appear to present a higher risk.

All employees are obliged to co-operate with all accident investigations and to provide any information that may be useful in establishing the circumstances surrounding the accident to the Managing Director.

If an accident necessitates an employee being absent for over 3 days, it is the Managing Director's responsibility to ensure that the Health and Safety Authority are informed via the relevant Accident Report form (IR1) which is available from the HSA website.

ANTI BULLYING CODE

- Youth Ballet West provide a place where every member can feel secure
- Youth Ballet West provide a place where it is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour

- Youth Ballet West provide a place where name calling is not tolerated
- Youth Ballet West provide a place where no one suffers abuse of any nature
- Youth Ballet West provide a place where no one is victimised
- Youth Ballet West provide a place where each member is supported and listened to
- Youth Ballet West provide a place where it is each member's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equally
- Youth Ballet West provide a place where solutions to problems are the concern of all

See Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures – Appendix 9

APPENDIX 1 – Parental/ Guardian Consent Form

Youth Ballet West

Parental/Guardian Consent Form

Any exceptional travel or residential trips will require an additional consent form to be completed by the parent/guardian.

Name: _____ Gender: Male Female

Address: _____

Contact Phone Number(s): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Other Relevant Information (e.g. medical conditions, special needs or dietary requirements)

Contact details for parent/guardian

1. Name _____

Daytime phone number: _____ Home phone number: _____

Mobile number: _____ Email: _____

2. Name _____

Daytime phone number: _____ Home phone number: _____

Mobile number: _____ Email: _____

In case of a medical emergency:

In the event of illness or accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a suitably qualified medical practitioner and/or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible. In an emergency I can be contacted at the following telephone numbers:

Home: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

Consent for Photographs/Videos

I understand that the proceedings may be photographed/videoed and used for promotional purposes.

Signed: _____

(Guardian)

Name (block letters) _____

(Guardian)

Signed: _____

(Young person)

Address: _____

Date: _____


Phone No. _____

Relationship to Child/Young Person: _____

APPENDIX 2 - Standard Form For Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns to TULSA (CFA)

SAMPLE - first page only

(Copies of official form available in the office)



An Oklahoma nonprofit
Specialty Agency Through
Child and Family Services

FORM NUMBER: CCFY-61-01

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CFCM Concerns)

A. To Principal Social Worker Designate: _____

1. Date of Report

2. Details of Child

Name:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	DOB:	<input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/>
		School:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Age:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	(Correspondence address if different)	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Telephone:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Telephone:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>

3. Details of Person Reporting Concern(s)

Name:	Telephone No.:
Address:	Occupation:
	Relationship to child:
Reporter wishes to remain anonymous <input type="checkbox"/>	Reporter discussed with parents/guardians <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Parents Aware of Report

Are the child's parents/caregivers aware that this concern is being reported?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment:

5. Details of Report

(Detail of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) date, time, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.)

10.13.2.13 (14 Jan '14) (mp)

APPENDIX 3 - Acceptance of Youth Ballet West Child Protection Policy Declaration

Acceptance of Youth Ballet West Child Protection Policy

Declaration from all staff members working with children and young people

Surname _____ Forename _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Contact Phone Number _____

I have read Youth Ballet West's Child Protection Policy and code of behaviour and agree to abide by its contents.

Signature _____

Date _____

I confirm that there is no reason why I would be considered unsuitable to work with children or young people.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 4 – Vetting form

(A copy of the form from will be issued for completion by the Managing Director or the Artistic Director)

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA



NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU

Guidelines for completing Vetting Form (NVB 2)

Please read the following guidelines before completing this form.

Miscellaneous

The Form must be completed in full using **BLOCK CAPITALS** and writing must be clear and legible.

The Form should be completed in ball point pen.

Photocopies will not be accepted.

All applicants will be required to provide documents to validate their identity.

If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a completed NVB 3 - Parent/Guardian Consent Form will be required.

Section 1 Personal Details

Insert details for each field, allowing one block letter per box.

For Date of Birth field, allow one digit per box.

For Gender field please tick the appropriate box.

Please provide changes of names, if any, from birth i.e. name change due to marriage, deed poll, adoption.

For Place of Birth, please state County/State of birth as this is a mandatory field.

Please state Country Of Birth as this is a mandatory field.

Please state your Passport Number where applicable.

Please state your Mother's Maiden Name as stated on your birth certificate.

Any fields not applicable to the applicant should be marked "N/A".

Section 2 Addresses

Please enter all your previous addresses in chronological order.

The address fields should be completed in full, including Eircode/Postcode. No abbreviations.

Insure that all years from birth to present are included.

Allow one letter per box and an empty box between words.

For the "Years From" and "Years To", please specify the year only e.g.

1	9	6	3
---	---	---	---

It is permitted to have more than one address in any given year.

Section 3 Self Disclosed Criminal Record

Criminal record means a record of the person's convictions whether within or outside the state for any criminal offence together with any ancillary or consequential orders made pursuant to the convictions concerned or a record of any prosecutions pending against the person whether within or outside the state for any criminal offences or both.

A person shall not be obliged to provide details of any convictions to which Section 14A of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 applies.

Section 4 Liaison Person

This section is not to be filled out by the applicant.

Section 5 Declaration of Consent

The applicant must confirm their understanding and acceptance of the statement by ticking the appropriate box where indicated. The date must be the present date of signing.

Section 6 Additional Addresses

See guidelines for Section 2 Addresses.

Application valid on the commencement of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

APPENDIX 5 - Incident/Accident Report Form

Incident/Accident Report Form

Name of event/meeting where the incident/accident occurred _____

Date _____

Location _____

Briefly describe what happened _____

Who was involved _____

Any injury sustained? _____

Who dealt with the situation? _____

How was it resolved/dealt with? _____

Any follow up required? _____

Please attach any additional information if required _____

Signature: _____

Name (block letters): _____

APPENDIX 6 - Reference Form Confidential

Reference Form

Confidential

_____ has applied to work with Youth Ballet West and has given your name as a referee.

This post involves substantial access to children and young people and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children and young people, we need to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people.

Yes No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference form, all information contained on the form will remain confidential and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor, should they be offered a position. It is very important that this reference form accurately reflects your knowledge and experience of the named person.

How long have you known this person ? _____

In what capacity ? _____

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes them suitable to work with children and young people ?

Please rate this person on the following (Please tick)

	Poor	Average	Good	V. Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self Motivation					
Motivation of others					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed _____ Date _____

Occupation _____

APPENDIX 7 - Recognising Child Abuse

Definition and Possible Physical and Behavioural Indicators of Child Abuse

Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point.

Possible indicators of this type of abuse are:

- Frequent minor or serious injuries
- Untreated illness
- Hunger, lack of nutrition
- Tiredness
- Inadequate and inappropriate clothing
- Lack of supervision
- Low self esteem
- Lack of peer relationships

Emotional

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

Possible indicators of this type of abuse are:

- Unreasonable mood and/or behavioural changes
- Aggression, withdrawal or an 'I don't care attitude'
- Lack of attachment
- Low self esteem
- Attention seeking
- Depression or suicide attempts
- Persistent nightmares, disturbed sleep, bedwetting, reluctance to go to bed

- A fear of adults or particular individuals e.g. family member, baby-sitter or indeed excessive clinginess to parents/carers
- Panic attacks

Physical

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Possible indicators of this type of abuse are:

- Frequent bruising, fractures, cuts, burns and other injuries
- Torn clothing
- Bite marks burns or welts
- Bruises in places difficult to mark e.g. behind ears, groin
- Undue or unnecessary fear
- Aggressiveness or withdrawn
- Absconding frequently from home

Sexual

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Possible indicators of this type of abuse are:

- Over affectionate or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge given the child's age, which is often demonstrated in language, play or drawings
- Fondling or exposure of genital areas
- Hints about sexual activity
- Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing, e.g. games/swimming

Indicators of Abuse are Not Facts

It is important to stress that no one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse; it may indeed indicate conditions other than child abuse. A cluster or pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Signs must also be considered in the child's social and family context as child abuse is not restricted to any socio economic group, gender or culture. It is important to always be open to alternative explanations for possible physical or behavioural signs of abuse.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The statutory authorities should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indicator of abuse or neglect would not constitute reasonable grounds of for concern.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- specific indication from the child that s/he was abused;
- an account by the person who saw the child being abused;
- evidence such as injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way;
- an injury or behaviour, which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

A suspicion, not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, does not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

(Children First 1999, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3)

APPENDIX 8 - Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the HSE or An Garda Síochána. This means that even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

This protection applies to organisations and to individuals. It is considered therefore that organisations should assume full responsibility for reporting suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities. Reports to the HSE and to the Gardaí should be made by the Designated Liaison Person, as per the organisation’s policy and guidelines.

Section 3 (1) of the Act states:

“3. (1) A person who apart from this section, would be so liable shall not be liable in damages in respect of the communication, whether in writing or otherwise, by him or her to an appropriate person of his or her opinion that-

- (a) a child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or*
- (b) a child’s health development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected,*

unless it is proven that he or she has not acted reasonably and in good faith in forming that opinion and communicating it to the appropriate person”.

APPENDIX 9 - Anti Bullying Policy when working with children/young people

Youth Ballet West

Anti Bullying Policy when working with children/young people

What is bullying?

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others.

Examples of bullying include:

- Teasing
- Taunting
- Threatening
- Hitting
- Extortion
- Exclusion

Youth Ballet West Policy on Bullying when working with children/young people

The Youth Ballet West will not tolerate any bullying behaviour by children/young people or adults and will deal with any incidents immediately in accordance with this policy. This policy covers:

- Children/young people bullying other children/young people;
- Adults bullying children/young people;
- Children/young people bullying adults.

The policy is as follows:

- All children/young people and adults who participate in activities run by the Youth Ballet West will be treated with dignity and respect by adults and by other children/young people and will not be subject to bullying.
- All children/young people and adults who participate in activities run by the Youth Ballet West have a responsibility to treat other children/young people and adults with dignity and respect and refrain from bullying behaviour.
- It will be made clear to all children/young people and adults participating in Youth Ballet West events/activities that bullying is not acceptable and that other children/young people and adults should be treated with dignity and respect.

- There will be adequate supervision by Youth Ballet West or other staff/volunteers at all events/activities involving children/young people. This will help to prevent bullying.
- Youth Ballet West or other staff/volunteers will monitor all events/activities run by the Youth Ballet West involving children/young people to ensure that no bullying is taking place.
- If a Youth Ballet West or other staff/volunteer witnesses bullying or suspects that bullying is taking place he/she will follow the procedure outlined below.
- If a child/young person witnesses bullying or suspects that bullying is taking place he/she should report it to a Youth Ballet West or other staff/volunteer. The Youth Ballet West or other staff/volunteer will follow the procedure outlined below.
- If a child/young person is the victim of bullying he/she should report it to a Youth Ballet West or other staff/volunteer who will follow the procedure outlined below.

Procedure for dealing with bullying

- While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to the HSE or An Garda Síochána, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of the Managing Director.
- All reports of bullying will be recorded, investigated and dealt with by the Managing Director.
- The staff member who has received the complaint or witnessed the bullying will consult with the Managing Director, if present, or with Judith Sibley, to decide who is the most appropriate person to follow up on the complaint.
- The Managing Director will keep a record of the alleged bullying incident/s and the investigation and action taken.
- The Managing Director will speak separately to all involved in order to get all sides of the story. The Managing Director will also speak to others who may have witnessed the incident/s, if appropriate. The Managing Director will interview all involved in a calm manner and will seek answers to what, where, when, who and why.
- If the victim of the alleged bullying is a child, their parent/guardian will be informed of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.
- If the perpetrator of the alleged bullying is a child, their parent/guardian will be informed of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.
- *If the perpetrator of the alleged bullying is an adult, the Director General of the Youth Ballet West or the parent organisation of the staff member/volunteer (if appropriate) will be informed of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.*
- If the Managing Director concludes that bullying has not taken place, the following action will be taken:
 - The complainant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator/s will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the reasons why it was concluded that bullying did not take place
 - Support will be given to the complainant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator/s if necessary
 - A meeting will be arranged between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator to discuss the issues involved if both are agreeable and it is deemed appropriate.
- If the Managing Director concludes that bullying has taken place, the following action will be taken:

- The complainant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator/s will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the reasons why it was concluded that bullying took place
- Support will be given to the victim
- A meeting will be arranged between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator to discuss the issues involved if both are agreeable and it is deemed appropriate
- A meeting will be held with the perpetrator to discuss the bullying behaviour. They will be informed of the disciplinary action, which will be taken as a result of this bullying behaviour.

Disciplinary action

When the inquiry into the alleged bullying incident has taken place and it has been concluded that bullying occurred, it will be necessary to take some disciplinary action against the perpetrator of the bullying. The disciplinary action should be agreed between at least two staff members of the Youth Ballet West and should be appropriate to the seriousness of the incident/s. If the perpetrator of the bullying is a child/young person, the parent/guardian of the child/young person and the child/young person will be informed of the disciplinary action which will be taken. If the perpetrator of the bullying is an adult the following people will be informed of the disciplinary action, which will be taken:

- the Director of the Youth Ballet West;
- the director of the organisation which the adult works for (if relevant); and
- the perpetrator.

The options for disciplinary action include:

- ❖ For serious incidents involving children/young people, sending the child/young person home and not allowing them to participate in any further Youth Ballet West events/activities;
- ❖ For less serious incidents involving children/young people, allowing the child/young person to continue to participate in the event/activity once they have apologised to the victim and stated that they would not engage in any further bullying behaviour. Their behaviour would then be closely monitored;
- ❖ Providing support to the child/young person to get them to understand that their behaviour is not acceptable and monitoring their behaviour;
- ❖ For serious incidents involving a member of the Youth Ballet West, transferring the person out of the Youth Ballet West or transferring them to an area within the Youth Ballet West where they will not have any dealings with children/young people.
- ❖ For offences involving staff/volunteers from other organisations, informing their parent organisation of the offence and not working with that staff member or volunteer again.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Child

A 'child' is defined under the Child Care Act 1991 as anyone under the age of 18 years who is not married.

Child protection

The process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Child protection concern

The term 'child protection concern' is used when there are reasonable grounds for believing that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

Child welfare concern

A problem experienced directly by a child, or by the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare, and that warrants assessment and support, but may or may not require a child protection response.

Consent (parental permission)

Permission must be sought from the parent / carer and, where appropriate, from the child or young person, for any medical examination or interview to take place. In the majority of cases, the parent / carer will be invited to attend any medical examination with the child or young person. The HSE Children and Family Services and An Garda Síochána have a duty to consider the immediate safety of the child or young person.

Designated Liaison Person

Every organisation, both public and private, that is providing services for children or that is in regular direct contact with children should identify a Designated Liaison Person to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member who has child protection concerns.

Designated Officer

Specific grades within the HSE and all members of An Garda Síochána designated under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 are authorised as designated officers to receive reports of alleged child abuse.

Designated Liaison Person

Every HSE health area has a Designated Liaison Person within the HSE with responsibility for coordinating child protection services. These personnel are responsible for:

- Receiving all notifications of child abuse
- Taking decisions relating to the holding of child protection conferences
- Promoting inter-agency cooperation on child protection and welfare
- Promoting inter-professional and inter-programme cooperation on child protection and welfare
- Overseeing staff training programs
- Negotiating service agreements with non-statutory service providers.

Harm

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child.

Statutory Authorities

This refers to the government departments tasked with receiving reports or concerns relating to child abuse, namely the Social Work departments of the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána.

