

Child Protection Policy (Parents/Guardians)

Wolfe Stage School

*Last edit - July 2017

Information on our Child Protection Policy for Parents/Guardians

Here at the Wolfe Stage School we are committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. Children's welfare and safety is our top priority. We comply with Children First: National Guidelines for Child Protection and Welfare. To help us achieve this, we have a Child Protection Policy and Procedures which guide our work. Copies of our Child Protection Policy are available (on our website / from Careen Wolfe or Declan Wolfe our designated People for Child Protection).

Parents/guardians are children's primary carers. We work in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure children's safety and enjoyment of the activities we offer. We ask you to take some time to read our guidelines and programme information. If you have any questions or concerns you can talk to Careen or Declan, our Designated People for Child Protection.

Here are some questions you might want to ask:

What is a child protection policy?

A child protection policy is a statement of the organisation's commitment to keep children and young people safe and to report any concerns about their welfare. The policy will contain procedures for how this is done in the organisation.

These will usually include:

- A code of behaviour for staff.
- A safe recruitment policy.
- A Designated Person who deals with child protection issues.
- Procedures for reporting concerns to the HSE.
- Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers.
- A confidentiality policy.
- A complaints policy.
- An accidents and incidents reporting policy.

What should I expect from an activity or group my child takes part in?

- You can expect your child's safety and welfare to be the top priority.
- You will be informed about and asked to give your consent for all activities your child is involved in.
- You will be asked for some personal information, such as contact details and any health information which is relevant for your child.
- You can expect that staff or volunteers are carefully selected and suitable to work with children and young people.

What does confidentiality mean?

- Confidentiality means that information in relation to you or your children will only be shared with people who 'need to know'.
- Personal information about your family will be treated with respect and records will be securely stored.

Who does the organisation report to, if they have a child protection concern about a child or young person?

- If we have a child protection concern about a child we are obliged to report it to a Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive (HSE), or in an emergency, to An Garda Síochána.
- Reckless endangerment of children is a criminal offence under Irish law which could result in criminal prosecution and imprisonment for failure to comply with the relevant provisions of the appropriate legislation.

What information will be passed on?

- We will pass on the child's name, address and age, your name and address and will say what the reason for concern is.
- We will also include the name of the person making the report.
- Anyone making a report of suspected child abuse, provided they act 'reasonably and in good faith' will have immunity from civil liability (Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998).

Do I have a right to see information about me or my child?

- Yes. You have a right to see any records that are kept about you or your children.

Is there a code of behaviour for staff, children and young people, volunteers, parents?

- Yes. A code of behaviour for staff, including volunteers, is part of our child protection policy.
- We have a code of behaviour for children and young people.
- We have an anti-bullying policy.
- We also ask parents/guardians to comply with certain measures to ensure their children's safety (see below).

Who can I talk to if I have a concern about a child?

- If you have a concern about a child or young person, you can talk to Declan Wolfe or Careen Wolfe our Designated Person. (S/he) will listen to your concern and explain our Child Protection Policy to you.
- Alternatively, you can contact a Duty Social worker in the HSE directly.

Is there a complaints policy? Who can I talk to if I have a complaint?

- Yes, we have a complaints policy.
- If you have a complaint you can talk or write to Declan Wolfe or Careen Wolfe at (021) 4891 249 or (021) 4367 967. We will respond to your complaint within 48 hours.

Does the organisation have a health and safety policy?

- Yes. All organisations are required by law to have a safety statement and a health and safety policy.

Are staff vetted by the Gardaí and are references checked for all staff and volunteers?

- References are checked for all staff and volunteers.
- Where Garda Vetting is available it will be obtained.

- All staff and volunteers are asked to sign a declaration stating that they are suitable to work with children and young people and that they will abide by the organisation's child protection policy.

Does the organisation have a policy for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers?

- Yes. Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers are part of the child protection policy.

Can I come and visit or stay and watch the activities if I want to?

- No, parents and guardians are not permitted to be in the class, but will have opportunities to see progress at events held in the studios or stage.

Parents Co-operation

In order to help ensure children and young people's safety and welfare we ask parents to:

- Bring and collect children on time for the class.
- Staff are not responsible for children outside of programme hours.
- Inform the teachers if someone else is picking up the child.
- Give us any relevant information (e.g. health, ability, emergency contact).
- Follow directions of staff (facilitators/leaders) when requested.
- Complete and sign registration and consent forms for programmes as requested.

Chaperones

Throughout the school term we may require the assistance of parents/chaperones to assist in the production of events. While all our teachers have been vetted, The Vetting Act does not apply to unpaid volunteers (such as parents/chaperones) who assist the school on an occasional basis provided such assistance does not involve the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable persons. A parent who helps on an occasional and unpaid basis is therefore not subject to vetting as long as the parent is not involved in the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of pupils.

The Wolfe Stage School and its staff will have duty of care towards the pupils in the school. The school has in place adequate measures to ensure the ongoing safety of children while the person concerned is undertaking the relevant work or activities. Parents/Chaperones will remain under appropriate supervision by teaching staff and that the Parents/Chaperones made aware of relevant school policies and procedures in respect of child protection, codes of conduct, ICT usage etc.

Separate to the requirements of the Vetting Act, the Wolfe Stage School will always be cognisant of their civil law duty of care to their pupils and the need for prudent practice from a child protection perspective.

Do Parents that assist during School productions need to be vetted?

Parents who chaperone during school productions do not require Garda vetting as they will not have unsupervised access to children.

It is our policy that parents will not have unsupervised access to other peoples children.

Child Protection Policy (Policy & Procedures for Children)

Wolfe Stage School

Our Child Protection Policy

We in the Wolfe Stage School want to make sure that all children and young people who come to our school are safe and are protected from harm. We call this our Child Protection Policy.

Children and young people have a right to:

- Be safe.
- Be listened to.
- Be treated with fairness and respect.
- Be free from bullying.
- Get help and support if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Everyone working in the Wolfe Stage school respects these rights. This is part of our **Code of Behaviour**.

Our Child Protection Policy says that if anyone is worried that a child or young person is being hurt, bullied or abused, they should talk to Declan Wolfe or Careen Wolfe. They can be contacted at 021 4891 249 or 021 4367 967.

Abuse is not the fault of the person who is being hurt and nobody ever has the right to abuse anyone else.

If we are worried that a child or young person is not safe or might be harmed, we will talk to people who can help. If this happens Declan or Careen, our Designated Child Protection Officers will explain what is happening.

If you are worried about yourself or another child or young person, the most important thing is to talk to someone about it. The information you share will be kept private and only shared with people who need to know and can help.

Remember: Abuse is never your fault.

If you or someone you know is being abused in any way, the best thing you can do is talk to someone who can help.

Bullying

At the Wolfe Stage School we do not allow bullying.

Bullying can be someone:

- Calling people names or saying hurtful things.
- Taking money or food off you.
- Swearing at you.
- Pushing you around.
- Hurting your body in any way, such as pushing, pinching, punching or kicking you.
- Leaving you out or ignoring you.

Remember: Bullying is **NEVER** your fault, and never something that you deserve - you should be able to feel happy and safe wherever you are.

Making a complaint

We welcome comments and suggestions from children, young people, parents and others.

If you are worried or upset by something that happens here you can make a complaint. The person to talk to about complaints is:

Declan Wolfe or Careen Wolfe

(021) 489 1249 / (021) 4367 967

info@wolfestageschool.com

**Unit 2a Dosco Business Park,
South Douglas Road,
Cork**

We will listen carefully to your complaint and will answer it within 48 hours.

Remember - if you or someone you know is being abused in any way, the best thing you can do is talk to someone who can help.

Our code of behaviour

Our code of behaviour helps us to make sure that everyone at the Wolfe Stage School is safe and free from harm.

Sample code of behaviour

Adults/Leaders

- Treat everyone fairly.
- Listen to what children and young people have to say.

Children / Young People

- Co-operate with leaders instructions.
- Do not tolerate bullying.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.