



COMHALTAS



Craobh Niall Ó Cathasaigh, Baile an Chollaigh

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## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Guidelines & Procedures in respect of Branch

Involvement with Children/young persons and Vulnerable Adults

### DEFINITIONS:

A child or young person is defined as any person under 18 years.

“vulnerable person” means a person other than a child who is suffering from a disability, impairment or disorder which is of such a nature or degree as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard themselves against harm by another person or that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living.

### INTRODUCTION

COMHALTAS fully recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection. Our policy applies to all staff, branch members, volunteers, teachers, etc (hereinafter ALL referred to as “members”) working with the organisation.

COMHALTAS is an international organisation with many years’ experience in passing on our cultural traditions to younger generations through music, song, dance and the Irish language.

As a COMHALTAS member, staff or volunteer it is important to understand that you are in a position of responsibility, authority and trust with respect to the young people and any vulnerable adults you may work with or come in contact with in the course of Comhaltas related activities.

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom Comhaltas works, their health and well-being and their best interests are considered paramount.

Comhaltas members are required to adhere to the Policy, Procedures and Code of Practice in the exercise of their duties.

This document is written to ensure that working with Comhaltas in whatever capacity will be a safe and enjoyable experience for all involved.

# **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

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CCÉ is a voluntary based organisation: Its aims and objectives and are stated in its Bunreacht. The organisation is understood to be a key contributor to the informal music education sector, organising community based classes in traditional Irish music, song, dance, and other cultural activity and organising various public events and activities that promote cultural activity amongst children and adults.

Our branch has an appointed Designated Liason Person (DLP) for matters in relation to Child Protection and Guidelines and Procedures in respect of Branch Involvement with Children/Young persons and Vulnerable Adults. All CCE personnel with regular access to children and/or vulnerable adults are requested by the organisation to apply for CCÉ Garda Vetting.

All such personnel are asked to submit their notice of confirmed Vetting- with their vetting number – to any unit of CCÉ for which they operate any activity that involves regular access to children/ vulnerable adults. If for circumstances the regular adult – e.g. volunteer teacher/tutor/ organiser/ activity leader is not available at short notice the unit will ensure that any replacement adult working with the children is in the company of a CCE vetted adult. Minors can get CCE Garda vetted, with consent from their parent/guardian. CCÉ recommends that minors who work with children/vulnerable adults should be mentored by experienced and vetted adults to ensure that young leaders develop interpersonal skills that reflect best practice. Parents and guardians of children attending classes and activities are at all times notified of appropriate schedules, locations etc. of activities. Parents and guardians are informed of the local CCÉ unit's policy and practices as relate to activities organised for children and pupils – e.g. if regular attendance at a class is necessary to ensure consideration for a branch activity. CCÉ officers/mentors are volunteers who need to use the most efficient means of communicating details of activities relevant to their pupils/young members etc. Parents/guardians are asked to provide their mobile numbers/ email addresses in this regard. CCE adults do not knowingly communicate with a pupil / minor using any means of digital or other communication including / social media. Any photographs or audio/visual recordings of any minor taken by a CCÉ officer/member are taken in the presence of the parent/ guardian and/or with the understood consent of the parent/guardian. It should be noted that recordings of artists, whatever age, are very much part of the intergenerational transmission of Irish traditional music and are understood to be a standard means of transmission in an oral art form. As applies in any informal/formal instruction/activity regarding young persons it is regarded as part of the parents/guardians duty to ensure that the child is accompanied safely to the appointed location where the activity is taking place and into to the temporary care of the designated adult. In many CCÉ settings children/minors pupils participate in a number of classes/activities which do not run consecutively. Some units are in a position to provide a waiting area with designated

supervisors. Supervision arrangements in such cases – if available and if not available - should be communicated to parents/guardians. Units are encouraged to consider the process whereby pupils are known to have entered / exited the building. The class register/attendance sheet is an important element of Child Protection Policy implementation. Branch teachers and mentors are clear on their role and responsibility in terms of appropriate supervision of children while in their care and the general supervision practices of the branch.

Parents/guardians are informed of the Branch Policy in terms of the use of mobile phones/digital recording devices: In addition parents/guardians understand that any use of social media by their child including sharing of digital files, relating to any CCÉ activity is not the responsibility of the CCÉ unit. The unit has given careful consideration to the logistical lay-out of the building(s) it uses and the various rooms / areas within that are accessed by children and adults during a Comhaltas activity from a health and safety and safeguarding perspective. CCÉ mentors, teachers and relevant personnel are recommended to complete the online TUSLA's Access to Children First E-Learning Programme. All CCÉ units are requested to ensure that Child Protection and Safeguarding are an item of each meeting of the unit, to ensure continued awareness and to allow for continued updating and review. This inclusion of the topic on the minutes allows for local review on local provision.

## **DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION LIAISON PERSON**

A Designated Liaison Person (DLP) has been appointed within the branch at CCÉ Ballincollig.

## **PROCEDURES**

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with the following policies and procedures:

- (1) CCÉ Child Protection Policy and Guidelines & Procedures in respect of Branch Involvement with Children/young persons and Vulnerable Adults
- (2) Appointing a Branch DLP
- (3) Obligatory CCÉ Vetting for all Comhaltas personnel with regular access to children and vulnerable adults.
- (4) Carrying out a Risk assessment based on the local provisions and setting.
- (5) Completing the Branch/ Centre safeguarding statement which is considered and adopted by the Branch Committee/ Centre Board of Management.

Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla is outlined by CCÉ's Child Protection policy and during Training seminars facilitated by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, CCÉ National Child Protection Liaison. The statutory requirements under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare

of Children (2017), and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, are core documents which inform the above and are available on Tusla's website.

Attendance at the training seminars' presented by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, National CCÉ Child Protection Liaison also provides ongoing guidance to CCÉ units and personnel. All procedures listed are available upon request.