



## **Child Protection and Welfare Policies and Procedures**

## **1. Teac Damsa Introduction**

Teac Damsa was established in 2016 when the Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre moved from the Irish midlands to the West Kerry Gaeltacht on the Southwest coast of Ireland. Teac Damsa makes dance and theatre work informed by a sense of place and nurtures a deeper more meaningful connection with the traditions, language and music of Ireland. Teac Damsa creates a place where artists can work together to make dance and theatre work that transforms both artist and audience.

## **2. Teac Damsa's Guiding Principles:**

- Recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensures that all our staff are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children and young people in their care.
- Responds swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provides parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Designates a liaison person who takes specific responsibility for child safety and acts as the main point of contact for parents, children, young people and outside agencies. We will ensure children know to let the DLP know if they feel unhappy or unsafe.
- Ensures access to confidential information is restricted to the Child Protection Officer or appropriate external authorities.
- Ensures children know their rights by giving them an information leaflet

## **Duties of Designated Liaison Persons**

Teac Damsa has appointed a Designated Liaison Person and a Deputy Designated Liaison person to act as a first point of communication with children, parents and outside agencies when dealing with any child protection issues.

### **Designated Liaison Person**

Marina Dunford

Company Stage Manager

Teac Damsa

### **Deputy Designated Liaison Person**

Dawn Prentice

Producer

Teac Damsa

These roles are a resource to any staff member who has child protection concerns and is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Health Service Executive (HSE) or an Garda Síochána.

Duties of the Designated Liaison person include:

- To operate within the guidelines set by the appropriate authorities and those approved by Teac Daírsa.
- Reports suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the statutory authorities, i.e. an Garda Síochána and HSE.
- Liaises between the young people, staff and the statutory authorities where necessary.
- Creates and maintains links with the statutory authorities and other relevant agencies and resource groups.
- Facilitates the provision of support to any victim or employee making a referral and provides support also to the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Advises on good practice.
- Organises/facilitates training and workshops on guidelines in child protection.
- Maintains proper records on all cases referred to him/her in a secure and confidential manner.
- Keeps up to date on current developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy.

### **3. Types of Abuse and How They May be Recognised**

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

#### **(i) Neglect**

Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision

Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding

Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation

Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture

Lack of adequate clothing

Inattention to basic hygiene

Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age

Persistent failure to attend school

Abandonment or desertion

#### **(ii) Emotional Abuse**

Rejection

Lack of comfort and love

Lack of attachment

Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)

Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned) Continuous lack of praise and encouragement

Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child

Bullying

Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions

Extreme overprotectiveness

Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)

Ongoing family conflicts and family violence

Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

### **(iii) Physical Abuse**

Physical punishment

Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking

Pushing, shaking or throwing

Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling

Use of excessive force in handling

Deliberate poisoning Suffocation Fabricated/induced illness

Female genital mutilation

### **(iv) Sexual Abuse**

Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child

An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification

Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation

Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal

Sexual exploitation of a child

Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology

Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

## **4. Circumstances That May Make Children More Vulnerable to Harm**

If you are dealing with children, you need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come in contact with;

### **Parent or carer factors**

Drug and alcohol misuse

Addiction, including gambling

Mental health issues

Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability

### **Child factors**

Age

Gender

Sexuality

Disability

Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide

### **Community factors**

Cultural

Ethnic, religious or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction

Culture specific practices, including: – Female genital mutilation – Forced marriage – Honour-based violence –

### **Radicalisation Environmental factors**

Housing issues

Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently

Poverty

Begging

Bullying

Internet and social media-related concerns

### **Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage**

Non-attendance at appointments

Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected

Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change

Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services

Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans

## **5. Reporting Procedures**

### **Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare.**

Teac Daírsa has designated a Designated Liaison person and Deputy Liaison person Person as the person to contact if there is an issues or concern about any aspect of a child or young persons safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure the procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Child Safely Liaison officer to make contact with the Health Service Executive or Gardai where appropriate.

### **6. The following excerpt from Children First, Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern;**

- (i) Specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused
- (ii) An account by a person who witnessed the child or young person being abused
- (iii) Evidence, such as an injury or behavior, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) An injury or behavior which is consistent with both 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)
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

### **7. Immediate risk of harm to a child**

Where it is believed a child is at risk of immediate harm, you should contact Tusla without delay before making a written report. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk of harm, while waiting for Tusla to intervene. If you think the child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact An Garda Síochána.

## **8. Talking primary carers about concerns for their child**

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

Notify primary carers of our Child Protection Policy

Inform primary carers of all activities and potential activities

Issue contact/consent forms where relevant

Comply with health and safety practices

Operate child-centered 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/young person at further risk

Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the HSE Duty Social Worker and, in emergency, An Garda Síochána

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 organization, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will;**

Contact local HSE and An Garda Síochána where there is a Child protection welfare concern

Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organization to ensure the safety of their children

Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child/young person's welfare.



## **9. Dealing with a disclosure**

The following procedure should be followed

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

### Retrospective Disclosures

Some adults may disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures may come to light when an adult attends counselling, or is being treated for a psychiatric or health problem. The reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 apply only to information that you, as a mandated person, received or became aware of since the Act came into force, whether the harm occurred before or after that point. However, if you have a reasonable concern about past abuse, where information came to your attention before the Act and there is a possible continuing risk to children, you should report it to Tusla under this Guidance.

Retrospective allegations or disclosures will be treated in the same manner as current ones.

## **10. Recording Procedures**

Teač Dańsa will keep an incident book in place in order to record any concerns about the protection of children or young people. This book can only be accessed by those directly involved in lodging a concern regarding a child or young person.

The person who expresses the concern will be involved and kept informed. Actions and outcomes will be noted. All details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts will be recorded in the Incident Book. Information recorded should be factual. Any opinion should be supported by facts. The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with the primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the HSE unless it is likely to put the child/young adult person at further risk. The designated person may contact the HSE Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report. (The HSE

have a Social Worker charged with Child Safety on duty at all times). Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

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

## **11. Training**

All staff will

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices
- Be expected to have read the Child Protection Policy Statement
- Be provided with child protection training where necessary

## **12. Safe Recruitment and Management**

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people by observing following principles;

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid and voluntary)
- Candidates will be required to submit CV
- All staff will be required, where applicable to consent to Garda clearance and referee confirmation
- Staff will undertake relevant training.
- Some grounds for exclusion would include; any child related convictions, refusal to submit references and declaration form, concealing information, insufficient documentary evidence of identification

In the case of working with a child in a professional production, except when the child is in the charge of a parent or guardian, a suitably qualified and vetted chaperone shall be in

charge of the child while they are present at a place of performance or rehearsal.

### **13. Code of Behaviour for Staff**

The code of behaviour can be categorised under the following headings;

- Child-centred approach
- Good practice
- Appropriate behavior
- Physical contact
- Health and Safety

#### Child-centred approach

- Treat all children and young people equally but respect differences of ability, race, culture, religion and sexual orientation
- Listen to and respect children and young people
- Where appropriate, involve children and young people in decision-making
- Provide encouragement, support and praise. Teac Damsa are committed to a positive approach to education and this should be reflected in facilitation.
- Use of appropriate language
- Ensure expectations meet the abilities of the group and do not compromise a positive approach
- Discuss boundaries and behaviours with the group before beginning session
- Encourage feedback
- Be cognisant of a child or young person's limitations and work appropriately
- Create an atmosphere of trust

#### Good Practice

- Register each child or young person with contact details
- Make primary carers aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures available on our website
- Have emergency procedures in place
- Report any concerns to the designated Child Safely Liaison or Deputy Child

Safety Liaison Person and follow reporting procedures;

- When working with children/young people a teacher or second supervisor must be present.
- Encourage children/young people to report any bullying. Our Anti-bullying policy is contained in our employee handbook
- Observe appropriate dress/language/behaviour
- Provide appropriate training for all staff and volunteers
- Report and record any incidents and accidents
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved.
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations
- Have written agreements between artists and organisations
- Always act if concerned and inform the Child Safety Liaison or Deputy Child

Safety Liaison Person

- Avoid if at all possible giving private lifts to a child/young person and if necessary to make sure the primary carer is involved and informed.

#### Appropriate Behaviour

- Avoid spending prolonged time alone with children/young persons
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually physical and /or verbal language
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus or attention
- Do not hit or physically chastise children/young people
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people eg. outside of structured activities

#### Physical Contact

- Seek consent of children/young person
- Avoid inappropriate physical contact

## Health and Safety

- Do not leave children/young adults unsupervised
- Manage any dangerous materials
- Provide a safe environment
- Be aware of accident procedures and follow the protocol.

### **14. Dealing with Allegations Against Staff**

Two separate procedures must be followed;

1. In respect of the child/young person one of the designated Liaison Officers will deal with issues related to the child/young person
2. In respect to the person against whom the allegation is made the Liaison Officer, company director or a designated board member will deal with the issues related to the staff member.

At the same time ensuring

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
- If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated person should be contacted;
- The reporting procedures outlines in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the primary carers and the 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 staff member will be informed as soon as possible;
- The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with HSE and Gardai;

After consultation, the chairperson/head of organization should advise the

a person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

### **15. Safe Management of Activities with Children.**

**Teac Damsa will ensure that we are:**

Providing a suitable and accessible venue

Providing resources and materials needed for the activity

Getting parental or guardian consent for their child to participate

Providing an adult to child ratio that ensures safe levels of supervision

Ensuring staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver the activity

Accessing first aid equipment managing incidents and accidents

Having parental contact details of parents or guardians in case of an emergency

### **16. Complaint Procedures**

Teac Damsa aims to respond to all complaints and comments in a timely and appropriate manner. In order to achieve this the following procedures are to be followed;

All complaints/comments are to be logged in a complaints book

When logging a complaint the it is important that the following information is included

(i) name of person making the complaint

(ii) name of the person to whom the complaint/comment was made

(iii) date and time

(iv) nature of the complaint

The person who logs the complaint then passes this on to Teac Damsa staff who will then direct it to the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint. All complaints are to be responded to within a period of 4 weeks. Any action taken as a result of the complaint is to be logged in a complaints book alongside the original complaint. The person to whom the complaint was originally made is to be kept informed as to progress.

TEAC  
DAMSA

## **Appendix (i)**

### **Confidentiality Statement**

We in Teac Damsa are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality.

However in relation to child 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/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 HSE, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- 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/video devices will not be used in public performance);
- 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.





## **Appendix (ii)**

### **Child Safeguarding Statement**

#### **Teac Dańsa**

Michael Keegan-Dolan (Mich  el MacAodhag  in-O'Dobhailen) founded Teac Dańsa as a means to forge deeper connections with the traditions, language and the music of Ireland. The name Teac Dańsa 'House of the Dance' in Classical Irish, reflects Michael's ongoing journey to create dance and theatre work that clearly reflects the place from which it originates.

The company's primary objective is to develop, promote and teach the performance, study, appreciation and public enjoyment of dance and dance theatre.

Our work sometimes engages with children and young people, through workshops and performances.

#### **Child Protection Statement**

We are committed to providing a safe environment and positive experience for all children and young people with whom we interact, a place where the welfare of the young person is of paramount importance.

We have developed policies and procedures to ensure this commitment is enshrined in all aspects of our work with children and young people.

This Welfare and Child Protection Policy gathers all policies and procedures that relate to work with young people and adheres to Children First Act 2015, and the "Children First:

National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017", and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

Our policy is relevant to all adults involved in Teac Dańsa's work with young people. Parents and Guardians will be informed of relevant policies and procedures.

We are committed to reviewing our policies and procedures every two years or where materially relevant.

## PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

Below are the principles which will be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while engaging with or performing with Teac Dańsa.

- All staff, and any artists/facilitators engaged to work with children, are Garda vetted.
- All staff and any artists/facilitators engaged to work with children have undertaken Tusla online Child Protection Training – Children First ELearning.
- We endeavour to create and encourage a friendly, welcoming and positive atmosphere at all times.
- All child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.
- Children are always accompanied by a parent/guardian/ chaperone, teacher or member of staff while in the venue.
- A child in need of personal support because of illness, physical needs or any form of distress, shall be referred in the first place to his/her parent/guardian/ chaperone or teacher. In the absence of a guardian, the staff member who is working with or supervising that activity will provide such support.
- A parent/guardian/ chaperone or teacher should inform a member of staff if there are any specific needs required during a child’s participation at an event.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Non-compliance with the company’s Child Protection Policy	All staff, artists and volunteers are provided with the Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures and policies for the safeguarding of children during their engagement with Teac Dańsa. Any breach of the Child Safeguarding procedures will be reported to the relevant line manager. The Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every 2 years
Risk of harm not being recognised by staff and risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by staff	All staff and incoming organisations working with children are provided with a copy of the venue’s Child Safeguarding Statement

	<p>The company's Child Protection Procedures are made available to all staff who are required to adhere to same.</p> <p>All staff have undertaken Tusla online Child Protection Training – Children First E-Learning and the company maintains records of all staff, artists and board member training.</p>
Delay in making referrals to Tusla	All staff are trained and supported to ensure they can act promptly and not delay in contacting the Designated Liason Person or Tusla when they deem a referral may be required.
Receipt of complaints of alleged child abuse where a staff member is the alleged perpetrator.	<p>The company adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation in relation to directly employed persons</p> <p>All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liason Person or directly to Tusla. Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee.</p>
Receipt of complaint of alleged child abuse where a parent, guardian or teacher is the alleged perpetrator	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liason Person or directly to Tusla.
Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children during their engagement with the company	The company has a minimum ratio of supervising adults/children outlined in its contracts with children involved in our shows to ensure appropriate supervision of children during their time with the company.
Risk of inappropriate use of video/photography/other media to record children's activities	<p>All staff working with children are informed of the following:</p> <p>Parents must be informed in advance that photography is not permitted during performances. Cameras, camera phones or other recording devices are not permitted in the dressing room/backstage areas of any venues that the company is using.</p> <p>If the company is making an official recording of the performance, we secure</p>

	the permission of parents/ guardians in advance.
Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liason Person or directly to Tusla.
A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Person or directly to Tusla.

## PROCEDURES

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with 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. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are engaging with our company:

We have implemented procedures covering:

- Duties of Child Protection Liaison Officer
- Code of behaviour for all staff
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selecting staff
- Managing and supervising staff
- Involvement of primary carers
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff

## IMPLEMENTATION

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process at Teac Damsa. Our company is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while engaging with us.

Any questions relating to this statement can be sent to the relevant person Áine Ní Éalaí aine@teacdamsa.com

