

Dóchas Child Safeguarding Statement

Name of Service being Provided

Dóchas Midwest Autism Support is a registered Charity, founded in 1997, that provides services to support children and young people with Autism as well as their parents, family members, and the community in the Midwest region.

Nature of Service

Dóchas provides support to children and young adults with Autism (Autism Spectrum Disorders). The challenges for those with Autism can include, Social and Communication challenges, Restricted or Repetitive Behaviours and unusual Sensory Responses. The Board of Trustees of Dóchas Midwest Autism Support is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people using the Dóchas service. Dóchas Staff and Volunteers have a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that children/young people availing of services, or attending the Dóchas Centre, are safe and protected from harm (physical/emotional/sexual abuse or neglect). Dóchas will fulfil its obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and is implementing the principles and requirements of the Children First, National Guidance for the Welfare and Protection of Children 2017.

Mission: Striving to improve outcomes for those impacted by Autism in the Midwest Region

Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm


Dóchas' policies, practices and activities are committed to following the principles of best practice in Child Safeguarding and Welfare as laid out in Children First 2017. These principles have been adapted into the Dóchas Child Protection and Welfare Procedure.

Guiding Principles of Children First Guidance and Legislation

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- The best interests of the child should be paramount.
- Early intervention is vital for better outcomes.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights, needs and duties of others, such as Dóchas' staff and Volunteers, parents/carers and families. Where there is conflict, the child's welfare must come first.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
- All children must be treated equally and have the right to be protected from harm and discrimination. Parents have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
- Child protection is a multi-agency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of children.

Risk Assessment

Dóchas has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. We have assessed current practices and procedures and included all means necessary to eliminate where practicable, or mitigate the risk of harm to children while they are taking part in the activities of the service.

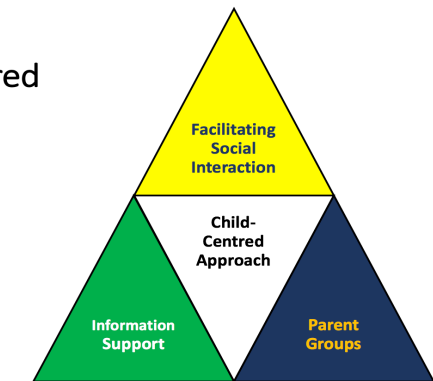
 Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment		
Risk	Risk Category	Mitigating Action
Child to Adult Ratio not observed for clubs. Parents who attend clubs cover their own child only.	Risk of harm from a service user, visitor or member of the public (includes on line risk)	Ratio of Child to Adult in Clubs. These ratios will be adapted to suit the complexity and needs of each group involved in the Social Clubs. The ratios will be documented in the Code of Conduct Procedure for Club Leaders to adhere to.
Insufficient leaders (or appropriate leaders not available) for a group of young people on away trips to ensure safety of all club users particularly those with challenging behaviours	Risk of harm from a service user, visitor or member of the public (includes on line risk)	Club Leaders will have flexibility on selection criteria for those who go on away trips to ensure safety of all club users on trips. To be documented in the Travel Procedure.
Inadequate training and experience of those in direct contact with kids and young adults (staff and volunteers)	Risk of harm by a staff member	Training to be rolled out consistently for all existing and new Club Leaders on the Child Safeguarding Statement, Health and Safety, and Child Protection and Welfare procedures. Induction Programme to be developed. Garda Vetting and Reference checks completed on all new staff and volunteers as described in the current Child Protection Policy.
Staff or Volunteers failing to identify or report on a Child Safeguarding concern	Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a staff member	All staff and Volunteers to complete Mandatory Child Safeguarding training on line, eLearning module provided by the HSE 'An Introduction to Children First'.
Child Safeguarding Statement not in place	Risk of harm due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015	Child Safeguarding Statement training to be rolled out to all Staff and Club Leaders.
Child Protection Policy training for staff not up to date	Risk of harm due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015	Child Protection and Welfare Procedure to be updated and training to be rolled out to all Staff and Club Leaders.
No Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) Policy in place nor training completed for staff	Risk of harm from a service user, visitor or member of the public (includes on line risk)	MAPA procedure to be drafted and training to be rolled out to Staff and Club Leaders as required.
Child or young adult could leave the club area or building unnoticed	Risk of harm from a service user, visitor or member of the public (includes on line risk)	Access and Exit points to the building are secured during club times. This will be proceduralised in the Health and Safety Procedure.

Procedures

This 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 the Risk Assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of Dóchas' services. These policies and procedure on the safeguarding of children and young people ensure the effective management of child protection and welfare concerns in Dóchas:

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Child Protection and Welfare Procedure
- Code of Conduct Procedure (including Anti-Discrimination and Antbullying)
- Recruitment and Training Procedure
- Volunteering Procedure
- Incident and Accident Procedure
- Complaint Handling Procedure
- Health and Safety Procedure

Dóchas Child-Centred Approach



Implementation

The Trustees of Dóchas are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement by applying the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed by 31st May 2022, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Cyril Killeen Centre Manager, Relevant Person Dóchas Midwest Autism Support	Sheila Lowney Mandated Person and Board Trustee, Dóchas Midwest Autism Support
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For queries, please contact the Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015