

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

80:20 EDUCATING AND ACTING FOR A BETTER WORLD

The management committee of 80:20 recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of the work of 80:20 and must be reflected in all of the policies, practices and activities of the organisation.

To ensure the quality and safety of our work when working with young people 80:20 has adopted the following guidelines.

- In our behaviour and by our attitude towards young people we will respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young person.
- 80:20 respects and promotes the principles of equality and diversity and works with all children in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish constitution and law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 80:20 will ensure the organisation's staff and volunteers are fully briefed and aware of child protection issues.

Accordingly, in accordance with Children First Act 2015 and the guidelines of the Department of Education & Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools the management committee of 80:20 has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The management committee has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department of Education & Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy as well as the Department of Health and Children's *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*;
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Gráinne McGettrick
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Tony Daly
4. In its policies, practices and activities, 80:20 will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The organisation will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents

happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;

- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters. 80:20 will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult with a special vulnerability.
- Before any work is conducted with young people where 80:20 is the lead agency an appropriate risk assessment will be completed.
- When working in schools the relevant people will be consulted on normal school practice regarding outside agencies working with students.
- If for any reason a young person or group of young people is/are working in any 80:20 office appropriate measures will be taken to ensure a parent/guardian or teacher is notified.
- As appropriate, parental, school or youth group consent will be obtained before organising activities for young people including, where practicable, information re special medical needs or dietary requirements.
- Keep a record or have access to a record of the names, addresses and contact numbers of the parents/guardians of young people involved in 80:20 projects.
- Take care to ensure that adequate and appropriate supervision is in place before organising youth activities.
- Ensure that every activity conducted is covered under public liability insurance.
- Take care to ensure that the buildings and/or facilities used for activities with young people are suitable, safe and secure.
- Residential activities, study visits and trips require careful advance planning and a proportionate number of staff to provide supervision. Particular attention should be taken to ensure that the appropriate levels of privacy are respected when young people are away from home.
- There must be adequate and gender based supervision for boys and girls. Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that supervision is provided, rules and boundaries are made known to the young

people involved, and those who have special needs should be accommodated where possible.

- 80:20 personnel will maintain appropriate boundaries when dealing with young people and will also ensure their own protection in this regard.
- 80:20 personnel will respect the physical integrity of children and young people; this should not preclude normal expressions of warmth or happiness provided that they are acceptable to all parties concerned.
- Adults must not be alone in dormitories or bedrooms in which children are sleeping.
- Staff should be sensitive to the potential risk to personal safety and false allegation that may arise when they meet alone with a young person in a room. Where it is feasible they should consider leaving the door slightly ajar or informing another colleague that they will be alone in the room with the individual in question. It is recommended that each organisation/group develop a positive attitude among young people that respects the personal space, safety and privacy of their peers.
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature which may give offence or which could be interpreted as inappropriate are to be avoided.
- 80:20 personnel will not give lifts in cars to individual young people.
- 80:20 personnel will follow an agreed Code of Discipline when dealing with disruptive behaviour; children and young people benefit from appropriate boundaries and a clearly understood code of discipline; corporal punishment of children is not permitted in any circumstances.
- Due to the nature of our work we recognise that young people working with us may be exposed to emotionally traumatic situations and we will endeavour to offer appropriate support where necessary.
- The management committee will ensure that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place.
- This policy has been made available to 80:20 personnel and is readily accessible on request.
- This policy will be reviewed by the management committee every two years.

5. PROCEDURES

- 80:20 will cooperate with appropriate partner CP systems in place, in conjunction with confidentiality of young people involved.
- If a report needs to be made 80:20 will follow its own procedures in record keeping and informing the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- When working outside of 80:20, staff must be fully informed, respect and comply with child protection policies, procedures and practices in operation (such as in classrooms, youth projects, youth groups) appropriate to those environments.
- 80:20 will fully cooperate with the proper procedures and authorities (such as the Garda and the Child and Family Agency) appropriate to the groups and environments that staff and volunteers are working with young people
- 80:20 complies with relevant legislation relating to the storage of information with regard to young people:
 - Data Protection Act, 1998
 - Freedom of Information Act, 1997
- If a complaint or allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer of 80:20 the matter should be reported to the most senior person in the organisation.
- For staff/volunteers working directly with children/young people, Garda vetting will be sought.
- All staff and volunteers will be asked to read the 80:20 Child Protection Policy and will be asked to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents and that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with children/young people
- All staff of 80:20 will be expected to participate in relevant training from time to time. Those working directly with children/young people must have received some training on the issue of child protection
- Induction training for any new staff will include training on the 80:20 Child Protection Policy.

6. CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

As part of regular CP work (in line with Children First Act 2015) 80:20 will:

- 1) Conduct a Risk Assessment of any potential harm to a child using the service;
- 2) Prepare and make available a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines procedures to manage and reduce risk and safeguard children including:
 - Management of allegations against staff

- Recruitment of staff suitable to work with children
- Reporting of child abuse and welfare concerns to the Child and Family Agency
- Provision of child protection information, instruction and training to staff
- List of mandated persons
- Appointment of 'relevant person'

The Child Safeguarding Statement should be displayed and available to all staff, parents, the public and the Child and Family Agency and should be reviewed within a 24-month period.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

In matters of child protection, an employee/volunteer should never promise to keep secret, any information which is divulged. It should be explained to the young person that this information cannot be kept secret but only those who need to know, will be told. It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies. Any person who receives information from the Child and Family Agency/Tusla in the course of an investigation of a report shall not disclose that information to a 3rd party unless authorised in writing by Tusla. Unauthorised disclosure of such information constitutes a criminal offence.

The information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and the number of people that need to be informed should be kept to a minimum.

8. ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in 80:20 has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the child protection and welfare policy of 80:20 is promoted and implemented. A Deputy Designated Liaison Person in 80:20 will take over the responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person if they are unavailable for a significant amount of time.

The role of the Designated Liaison Person involves the following duties:

- To be familiar with "Children First", National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and "Our Duty to Care", the principles of good practice for the protection of children & young people and to have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the child protection and welfare policy of 80:20;
- To ensure safe management procedures are in place for all staff and volunteers including: robust recruitment, selection, supervision and support procedures;
- To ensure that training is provided for all new and existing staff in 80:20 on the child protection policy;
- To receive reports of alleged/suspected or actual child abuse and act on these in accordance with the guidelines;

- To ensure that supports are put in place for the young person, employees or volunteers in cases of allegations being made;
- To act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns;
- To build a working relationship with the Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies, as appropriate;
- To keep up to date and undertake relevant training on child protection policy and practice, in order to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of 80:20’s policy and procedures in this area;
- To review 80:20 policy and procedures on child protection on an annual basis and amend as appropriate;
- Ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated on new developments.
- To ensure that systems are in place for recording and retaining all relevant documentation in relation to child protection issues.

| Designated Liaison Person for 80:20 | Deputy Designated Liaison Person for 80:20 |
|--|---|
| Gráinne McGettrick 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World St Cronan’s BNS Vevay Road Bray, County Wicklow Phone: (01) 2860487 Email: info@8020.ie | Tony Daly 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World St Cronan’s BNS Vevay Road Bray, County Wicklow Phone: (01) 2860487 Email: tony@8020.ie |

9. DISCLOSURES, CONCERNS AND REPORTING

80:20 has put in place a standard reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse.

Definition and Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Definitions of the four types of abuse, how to recognise abuse and an explanation of “reasonable grounds for concern” can be understood as based on “Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children”. ‘Harm’, in relation to a child, means ‘to assault, ill-treat, neglect or sexually abuse the child and may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances or otherwise’.

Responsibility to Report Child Abuse

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be experiencing abuse or have been abused in the past. This is an important responsibility for staff and volunteers when working with children and young people.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting children abuse are summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority
- Reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker
- While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, children or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse.

The reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse is outlined in the following steps:

- The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse, should bring it to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person immediately.
- The Designated Liaison Person will assess and review the information that has been provided. The DLP may contact the Tusla/Child and Family Agency (CFA) for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.
- After consultation with the Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker, the Designated Liaison Person will then take one of two options:
 - Report the allegation, concern or disclosure to the CFA or
 - Not make a formal report to CFA but keep a record of the concerns on file. The reasons for not reporting the allegation, concern or disclosure will be clearly recorded. The employee/volunteer who made the initial report will be informed if a formal report is not being made to the CFA and it is open to him/her to make a formal report themselves, directly to the relevant authority if they feel this is necessary.
- Where a formal report is made the DLP will then liaise with An Garda Síochána. It is likely that the CFA will want to speak to the person who first made the report to clarify facts and the circumstances of the report.

In an emergency a report should be made directly to An Garda Síochána.

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the individual must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the young person and that no young person is ever left in an un-safe situation.

Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Information required when making a report

The more information which is gathered and put together on the Standard Reporting Form which has been adopted by 80:20 (see Appendix 1) the easier it will be to assess an allegation, concern or disclosure of abuse. Reports, which are made anonymously, will be followed up but this may take longer and will make it more difficult for the professionals involved to assess the situation.

If a person is unsure about the case, it may be useful to talk over the issue with the Designated Liaison Person or with a Tusla/Child and Family Agency worker before making an official report.

10. ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER

Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an employee or volunteer of 80:20, there are two procedures that 80:20 will put in place:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child;
- The procedure for dealing with the employee.

In the case of the allegation being against an employee of the 80:20, the same person will not deal with both the young person and the alleged abuser. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately. The Designated Liaison Person will follow the normal reporting procedure in 80:20. It will be the responsibility of the Coordinator of 80:20 to deal with a staff member against whom an allegation has been made.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Coordinator, the Chairman of 80:20 will deal with all aspects relating to the Coordinator.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Designated Liaison Person, the Chairman will deal with all aspects of the case, including the reporting procedure.

If an allegation is made against an employee of 80:20 the following steps will be taken:

- The Coordinator of 80:20 will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the employee.
- The allegation will be assessed by the Designated Liaison Person to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities, at this point. The DLP may wish to contact Child and Family Agency for advice on the issue.
- The safety of the child is the first priority of 80:20 and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child is safe. The measures taken will be proportionate to the level of risk.

- 80:20 will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/carers as appropriate.
- The 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 or other measures as deemed appropriate.
- If a formal report is being made the employer will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained.
- 80:20 will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- 80:20 will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and the Child and Family Agency and any decisions on action to be taken in regard to the employee will be taken in consultation with these agencies.
- The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this period and 80:20 will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.

In the case of an allegation being made against a volunteer within 80:20 the Designated Liaison Person will deal with the issue as outlined in the steps above.

This policy was adopted by the Management Committee on September 25, 2018

Signed: _____ Chairperson of Management Committee

Date: _____

Date of next review:

Signed: _____

Date: June 2020