

Galway Community Circus

Child Protection Policy



INTRODUCTION

Galway Community Circus in their capacity as an arts organisation, have developed a child protection policy for the company. Having clear policies and procedures in place will minimise the risk of abuse or harm to children and young people. In dealing with complaints and allegations, it will serve to support board members, all staff and volunteers and ease anxiety around the issues of child protection and welfare.

Galway Community Circus strives to raise awareness amongst board members, all staff and volunteers of the issues involved. There is an onus on everyone to report any/all concerns. Board members and core teachers of workshops are familiar with the definitions of abuse and are equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and know how to take a concern or an incident forward. Galway Community Circus' Child Protection Policy is available to all staff, volunteers, members, clients, parents and young people. All Galway Community staff and volunteers understand, accept and agree to abide by the guidelines of our Child Protection Policy.

Child Protection Policy Statement

Galway Community Circus is committed to a young-person centred approach in our work. We undertake to provide a safe environment and positive experience, where the welfare of the young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). We have developed policies and procedures to ensure that this commitment is enshrined in all aspects of our work. Galway Community Circus' board recognise the responsibility we hold in relation to the wellbeing of members and leaders. This policy is targeted at all adults involved in our organisation, be they staff or volunteers. Parents will be informed of policies and procedures. Galway Community Circus members will be informed of procedures and policies as they relate to their participation. We have also committed to review our policies and procedures on an annual basis.

Signed: [Galway Community Circus Designated Signatory]

_____ Date:

This policy will be reviewed on 1st of February 2014

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SECTION 1: Responsibilities of Galway Community Circus

SECTION 1.1: Structure/Governance

Galway Community Circus is a company limited by guarantee governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board is elected at the annual general meeting each September. The Board has a Chairperson, Secretary and a Treasurer. Each Board member has a specific area of responsibility / expertise including Welfare / Child Protection and Health and Safety.

Day-to-day management of Galway Community Circus is the responsibility of Project Manager, Youth Circus Coordinator and Administrator who are employed on a contract basis. The organisation also works with free-lance circus skills tutors and volunteers.

SECTION 1.2: Ethos/Approach to young people

Galway Community Circus has a member centred ethos and encourages the following approach:

- ⤴ Participation is voluntary
- ⤴ All members are treated equally
- ⤴ All members are listened to and respected
- ⤴ The opinions of members are actively sought by group evaluation/feedback discussions and written evaluation/feedback forms.
- ⤴ Differences of culture, religion, sexual orientation are respected
- ⤴ Membership is open to all young people aged between 5-20 years of age (Youth Circus) and 0-5 years (Toddler and Family Circus) regardless of ability or experience.
- ⤴ Galway Community Circus will do its best to include young people with disabilities. However we do recognise that this may not always be possible due to the lack of availability of a suitable venue and other factors over which we may have no control.

SECTION 1.3: Policies /Procedures

Galway Community Circus has developed various policies and procedures to help ensure members have a positive and safe experience but also to ensure the effective running of the organisation.

Galway Community Circus has put the following policies/procedures in place to help ensure the safe participation of everyone involved in the organisation, including members and leaders. We have collected these policies and outlined procedures in this document:

- ⤴ Welfare/Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- ⤴ Health and Safety Statement
- ⤴ Confidentiality Statement/Procedures
- ⤴ Complaints Policy/Procedures
- ⤴ Procedures for safe recruitment of staff/volunteers
- ⤴ Procedures for supervision, provision of training and support for staff/volunteers
- ⤴ Code of Behaviour for Tutors
- ⤴ Group Contract for Members
- ⤴ Disciplinary/Appeals Procedures
- ⤴ Policy on Informing Parents
- ⤴ Anti-Bullying Policy

- ⤴ Procedures for Trips Away
- ⤴ Guidelines on Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour
- ⤴ Guidelines on use of new technologies e.g. mobile phones/social networking

Galway Community Circus seeks to ensure the effective use of these policies and adherence to procedures by ensuring:

1. All new staff members/volunteers are provided with induction in all policies and procedures
2. Parents/primary carers are provided with details of policies and procedures
3. Members are informed to relevant policies and procedures
4. The board/committee reviews policies and procedures annually

SECTION 2: Galway Community Circus Leaders

This section outlines the role of the Galway Community Circus leaders, be they paid or voluntary, and indicates the approach they should take to align their work with the ethos of Galway Community Circus. This section is particularly applicable to those adults who have most direct contact with young people e.g. the tutors and group leaders.

SECTION 2.1: Code of Behaviour for Staff/Volunteers

Galway Community Circus is a child-focused organisation. Our mission is to facilitate children/young people and adults to explore the wonder of their world through the magic of creative expression. Fundamental to this is creating an experience where children/young people who participate in any aspect of the Galway Community Circus are treated with respect and care, and where their emotional, physical and mental safety is paramount.

The Code of Behaviour for Staff/Volunteers can be categorized under the following headings:

- ^ Child-centred approach
- ^ Good practice
- ^ Inappropriate behaviour
- ^ Physical contact
- ^ Health and safety
- ^ Outings Policy

Child-Centred Approach

- Treat all children and young people equally – do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status
- Help create an environment of trust in which members feel comfortable, accepted and able to express themselves
- Listen to and respect children and young people
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed. All criticism should be constructive and not overly focused on any one individual
- Treat all children and young people as individuals
- Respect differences of ability, cultural background, religion, race and sexual orientation
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session
- Encourage feedback and discussion from group
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
- Lead by example
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams
- Be cognizant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to for example a medical condition

Good Practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, and emergency contact)
- Be familiar with Galway Community Circus' policies and procedures
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures
- Be inclusive of children and young people with disabilities
- All reasonable efforts will be made to include children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person (Ulla Hokkanen) and follow reporting procedures
- Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of Galway Community Circus' anti bullying code
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis
- Avail of training opportunities provided by Galway Community Circus
- Report and record any incidents and accidents
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios (one adult per group of ten plus one other adult) according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisation, have guidelines and a prompt sheet for artists
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with and follow the child protection policy of that organization. □ Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing'
- Don't let a problem get out of control
- Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner
- Be aware of a child's/young person's privacy and safety in relation to use of media e.g. photos in press and on social networking sites

Inappropriate Behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities, including through the use of social networking sites

Physical Contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation). Resistance from the child should be respected
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises
- Let children/young people pair up with each other when doing activities requiring physical support/assistance
- Physical contact will be in response to the need of the child/young person and not the need of the adult
- Physical contact will be open and not secretive

Health and Safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised
- Manage any dangerous materials
- Provide a safe environment
- Be aware of Galway Community Circus Safety Statement and follow accordingly

Outings Policy

The following principals apply when dealing with any member of the public on behalf of the Galway Community Circus:

- Be polite, pleasant and helpful: Always treat the public with courtesy regardless of age. You represent the public face of the Galway Community Circus. Never be abrupt, short or rude to the public even if you regard the person to be wrong. Do not shout directions at children / adults or make any physical contact. Always remain calm, polite and efficient.
- Be firm (but polite): You have a job to do. For example, if you have to ask someone to keep an aisle clear, remember you are doing it for the safety of all and must ensure it is kept clear.
- Be aware: Know where all the fire exits and extinguishers are located and know the fire drill. Exits are to be kept clear and all staff at the venue are made aware to check exits.
- Do not argue with any member of the public: If there is a complaint regarding a situation you are not in authority to solve at the time, advise the complainant that they make a formal complaint by writing to Galway Community Circus Board of Directors.
- Do not smoke or curse in front of the public
- Alcohol: Consumption of alcohol is not allowed either immediately prior to or when on duty for the Galway Community Circus. If there is evidence that this has been the case, then you will be relieved of your duties immediately.
- Be on time: Punctuality on everyone's part is essential to the smooth running of the event.
- Be vigilant: Be aware of what is going on around you. Report any incident no matter how minor.
- Galway Community Circus staff or volunteers are not responsible for caring for children/young people on behalf of their parents/guardians at outing events that children/young people attend with their parents/guardians.

SECTION 3: Galway Community Circus Members

SECTION 3.1: Definition of Galway Community Circus membership

To be a member of Galway Community Circus one must have registered for the current Galway Community Circus term and have completed and signed a membership form. If under 18, a parent/primary carer must have also completed and signed a parental consent form.

SECTION 3.2: Group Contract

Galway Community Circus recognises the importance of members having a say in the running of the organisation. We also believe that members should have input into the Galway Community Circus rules. They should also be aware of the responsibility they have to each other and the role they can play in the success of the organisation. The Group Contract below was drafted in cooperation between members and leaders. All incoming members will be provided with a copy.

SECTION 3.3: Bullying

Galway Community Circus wishes to clearly state that bullying is not acceptable. Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression (be it verbal, psychological or physical) conducted by an individual or group against others. Any instance of bullying will be treated seriously. We encourage all members to approach an adult leader if they are being bullied/ aware of another member being bullied. We will take the following steps to promote this approach:

1. The issue of bullying, including types of bullying and consequences, is discussed with members when drafting the group contract. It is clear to every member of Galway Community Circus that it is not acceptable.
2. All new members will be made familiar with Galway Community Circus' stance on bullying.
3. All new staff/volunteers will be informed of Galway Community Circus' policy and will be instructed on indicators of bullying
4. Details of Galway Community Circus' policy will be included in information sent to parents/primary carers.

Galway Community Circus' Anti-bullying Code:

- ⤴ We provide a place where every member can feel secure
- ⤴ We provide a place where it is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour
- ⤴ We provide a place where name calling is not tolerated
- ⤴ We provide a place where no one suffers abuse of any nature
- ⤴ We provide a place where no one is victimised
- ⤴ We provide a place where each member is supported and listened to
- ⤴ We provide a place where it is each member's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equal
- ⤴ We provide a place where solutions to problems are the concern of all

HOW GALWAY COMMUNITY CIRCUS WILL DEAL WITH INSTANCES OF BULLYING:

- If a leader becomes aware of an instance/allegation or has a suspicion of bullying, they should try to establish as many facts as possible, including who was involved, the presence of any witnesses, was it a once-off occurrence etc.
- A written report should be kept.

- All instances of bullying should be reported to the Designated Person (DP).
- If a case of bullying is confirmed, the DP and adult leader will discuss the best approach. This will depend on the severity of the bullying, the ages of the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) among other factors.
- There will be an assessment made with regard to any welfare concerns for the victim or the perpetrator.
- The parents/ primary carers of both members will be informed, unless it is felt that doing so will put a young person at risk.
- Once all these steps have been taken, a decision will be taken on disciplinary procedures for the perpetrator(s).
- Leaders/the DP will emphasise the potential rewards should the behaviour of the perpetrator improve.

THE AGREED DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES ARE:

Less severe cases:

- It may be felt in some cases that a verbal or written warning is sufficient.
- **Withdrawal of Opportunities.** The member who has committed bullying may not be considered for some or all of the following for an agreed period, depending on the severity of the bullying and other relevant factors:
 - ▲ a workshop or series of workshops
 - ▲ away trips
 - ▲ workshops with other groups
 - ▲ workshops with guest facilitators
 - ▲ a production

More severe cases:

Suspension: The member who commits bullying may be excluded from the group for an agreed amount of time

Permanent Exclusion: A measure that will only be taken as a last resort in extreme cases, or where the member has been through all other sanctions and continues to display the behaviour. We will not take this action lightly and will make an assessment of the likely effects of exclusion on the young person in question. If we have any concerns about the welfare of the member in question, we will seek advice from the HSE.

SECTION 3.4: Members Over 18

Galway Community Circus includes member aged over 18. We recognise and value the contribution made by senior members. Group rules apply to all members regardless of age. Consumption of alcohol/use of drugs is not permitted at Galway Community Circus activity by any member. We recognise our duty of care to members over 18 also. If a member over 18 has any concerns or issues, we will treat them as seriously and with the same sensitivity as we would those of younger members. We will follow the agreed internal reporting procedures with regard to any disclosure/suspicion of abuse involving a member over 18 but will first seek the consent of the victim. If it is felt that any child is still at risk from an alleged abuser, a report will be made to the HSE.

SECTION 3.5: Dealing with Challenging or Disruptive Behaviour

Galway Community Circus has put the following procedures in place when dealing with disruptive behaviour:

- Leaders should always follow the agreed code of behaviour regardless of how frustrating a situation becomes.

- More than one leader should be present when dealing with an instance of disruptive behaviour.
- A member should be informed when they are in violation of the agreed group contract.
- A written record of any serious incidents of disruptive behaviour will be created. This record will be given to the Designated Person. The DP will be kept up to date with any developments.
- Galway Community Circus recognises that dealing with some situations/issues that members may have will be beyond the expertise of leaders and we may have to seek advice from a specialist organisation or agency or individual with specialist expertise
- We are aware that a member may be displaying challenging behaviour as a result of issues at home/school or in other areas of their lives and will treat the young person with sensitivity and leaders should be open to listening to a member expressing any concern. Leaders will adhere to Galway Community Circus' reporting procedures should they have a serious concern about the young person's welfare.
- Galway Community Circus' guidelines will be followed with regard to informing parents.
- Sanctions will only come into play once an assessment has been carried out of their possible impact on the welfare of the member.

SANCTIONS FOR CHALLENGING OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR:

Please see Group Contract and the agreed disciplinary procedures with bullying. In addition the following are the agreed sanctions for disruptive behaviour:

- If appropriate, a method of making amends will be sought e.g. if something is broken or damaged the member will be asked to replace it.
- A member may be excluded from participation in an event, trip, series of workshops etc.
- We will outline what rewards they can expect should their behaviour improve e.g. they will be permitted to take part in a trip / workshop etc.
- If a member's behaviour continues to be seriously disruptive, Galway Community Circus may have to consider suspension from the group and maybe even expulsion. Expulsion will be considered only as a last resort and only after serious consideration of any impact on the young person's well-being. Even in cases of expulsion we will endeavour to keep the lines of communication open with the young person and offer the possibility of re-admittance should behaviour change. This may not be possible in cases where we feel the welfare of other members would be put at risk if the young person in question were to be re-admitted.

SECTION 3.6: Galway Community Circus and New Technologies

Galway Community Circus is committed to the safe use of mobile phones, email, Galway Community Circus website and any social networking sites created by Galway Community Circus.

We have developed the following guidelines for use of such technologies:

USE OF MOBILE PHONES:

- Leaders should not give out their own mobile phone numbers. All communications via mobile phone should be on the Galway Community Circus' mobile phone.
- Access to member's contact details are controlled and restricted to those with a direct need to access them. Galway Community Circus does not provide members' phone numbers to any third party unless there is a legitimate reason and we get their permission/their parents/primary carers' permission in advance.
- Leaders are advised to send group texts rather than text individual members.
- Leaders should never send any communication that could be interpreted as offensive or inappropriate.

- Galway Community Circus encourages awareness among members and leaders of the possibility of misuse of mobile communications.
- Members are encouraged to voice any concerns they have in relation to bullying/harassment/abuse via mobile phone.
- The seriousness of bullying via mobile phone and its possible consequences are discussed with members.
- Leaders should be aware of the risk of abuse being carried out/initiated by mobile phone and should be prepared to follow the youth theatre's reporting procedures if they suspect abuse is taking place.

USE OF EMAIL:

- Leaders should not use their own personal email account to communicate with members. Galway Community Circus' email account(s) should be used.
- 'Joke' and 'circular' emails even if they seem innocuous should not be forwarded to members. The email account should be used for Galway Community Circus business only. • Awareness will be raised with members and leaders of the possibility of emails communication being used for bullying/harassment and even abuse.
- Galway Community Circus' reporting procedures should be followed in relation to concerns about suspected abuse via email.

USE OF GALWAY COMMUNITY CIRCUS WEBSITE:

- While Galway Community Circus can only be responsible for the content of its own site(s), we will do our best to ensure that inappropriate and offensive material cannot be accessed through our site.
- It is clearly stated that users cannot:
 - ▲ Use our site to bully, harass any other user
 - ▲ Add content or create a link to content that could be interpreted as offensive or inappropriate
 - ▲ Use inappropriate language
 - ▲ Misuse or take out of context any content on the site including images or video footage.
 - ▲ Use any content from the site without contacting Galway Community Circus first. • Galway Community Circus Administration Staff will monitor the site on a regular basis
- We will endeavour to remove inappropriate content as soon as we discover it.
- Cyber-bullying will be included in discussions with members around bullying.

THIRD PARTY SITES / SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:

Galway Community Circus uses a Facebook page which members of the public can "like" to keep up to date on Galway Community Circus events and activities.

- Galway Community Circus Project Manager and Administration Staff are responsible for the management and administration of any third party sites including Community Circus Facebook page.
- Discussion has taken place around the best settings for Galway Community Circus social networking site.
- Guidelines for safe use of Galway Community Circus Facebook site will be provided and discussed with members. Members will also be informed of the possible risks of using such sites.
- Members aged under 18 will only be permitted to become a member of Galway Community Circus group page if permission is given by parents in advance.
- Only users known to Galway Community Circus i.e. leaders, members, former members, will be permitted to join the group.
- Any user who posts inappropriate/offensive content/comments will be removed from the group

- The administrator of the site will remove any such content as soon as they become aware of it.
- Leaders are advised, in so far as possible, they should try to keep the content of their own personal social networking presence separate from that of the organisation.
- Galway Community Circus requests that any sites related to the organisation, but not created or managed by it, such as an alumni site, be managed in a responsible way that does not damage the reputation of Galway Community Circus.

USE OF IMAGES:

- Leaders should not take photos of young people on their own camera or mobile phone and only on Galway Community Circus' camera / mobile phone if they have a legitimate reason that is related to Galway Community Circus' work.
- We seek permission from parents of all members under 18 for use of images. We only use images in the ways outlined on the parental consent form.
- Member's personal details including their names will not be provided with images especially in relation to use on social networking sites and the "tagging" of photos
- Any inappropriate use of photographs will be treated very seriously by Galway Community Circus. The Designated Person should be informed and they will act in line with Galway Community Circus' child protection policy and procedures. A decision may be taken to involve outside agencies such as the HSE or the Gardaí.
- Comments posted on the internet in relation to photographs can be particularly hurtful and offensive. Galway Community Circus will take serious action, in line with agreed disciplinary procedures, should any member or leader post such comments.
- Images taken of young people should focus on the task they are doing, e.g., in a workshop exercise or in a scene from a show.
- Permission should be sought from Galway Community Circus for use of any images associated with its activities.

SECTION 3.7: Transport Arrangements

Galway Community Circus requests the cooperation of parents in ensuring that members have a safe way of getting home from Galway Community Circus' activities especially should workshop sessions, rehearsals or performances finish late at night. While we are not responsible for members once Galway Community Circus' activities have ended, leaders will be instructed not to leave a young person in a situation that is potentially risky e.g. they have a long walk home by themselves. If parents are collecting their son/daughter, we ask that they do so promptly and if they are delayed we ask that they contact us on the mobile number provided, to let us know when they expect to arrive.

While we advise that leaders do not give lifts to young people, if they find themselves in a position where they feel it is necessary, they should adhere to the following:

- ▲ If possible, another adult should accompany the leader.
- ▲ Inform the parent that you will be dropping the young person home.
- ▲ Inform someone else in the organisation, ideally the Designated Person, if a leader is giving a lift to a member.
- ▲ Try not to give lifts on a regular basis especially not to the same young person.

SECTION 3.8: Trips Away From Home

Galway Community Circus is committed to providing members with a varied and enriching experience during their time in Galway Community Circus and we believe that participation in festivals, exchanges, events involving other groups is an important part of this experience. We will take every effort to ensure that the well-being and safety of all

members are safeguarded during these trips. To this end, we have developed the following procedures:

- Leaders will be given a clear description of roles and responsibilities.
- Leaders will be chosen who are comfortable with the level of responsibility involved in trips away from home, and who are equipped to react appropriately should an issue arise or emergency occur. We will choose leaders who are easy to approach, should members have a concern.
- Leaders must adhere to the code of behaviour.
- Every effort will be made to ensure leaders travelling with members have received child protection training and have completed the Garda Vetting process.
- We will endeavour to choose leaders that reflect the gender mix of the group.
- Clear information will be provided to parents/carers. Parental consent and parent/carer contact details for all members aged under 18, will be sought. Medical information, for example on allergies and medication, will be requested. We will seek home contact details for those over 18 just in case of an emergency.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the planning, preparation and undertaking of outings
- Group rules will be agreed in advance with the members who are travelling and a copy will be given to parents.
- Consumption of alcohol is not permitted on any trips regardless of whether over-18's are involved. We recognise that there will probably be shared festival/exchange rules and they will need to be adhered to.
- Recommended ratios will be adhered to. For away trips it is recommended there be one leader to every eight young people plus one other adult. Allow an additional adult for every group of eight after that.
- Leaders will be given Galway Community Circus' Incident/Accident Report forms to bring with them. They will also be familiar with Galway Community Circus' Welfare/Child Protection policy and have contact details for the Designated Person. Leaders should adhere to Galway Community Circus' agreed reporting procedures should a child protection concern arise. They should also inform the organisers should an incident/accident arise, as depending on the nature of the occurrence, it may be the responsibility of the organisers to deal with the situation or to remedy a health and safety issue.
- Adequate insurance cover will be taken.
- We will seek information, such as contact details for local doctors and the location of the nearest hospital, from the event organisers.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that at least one of the leaders is a competent first aider and is provided with a fully stocked First Aid kit. Failing this, we will check that the event organisers have made provision for first aid.
- It will be made clear to parents that they will have to collect their son/daughter should they be in serious violation of group rules.
- Leaders have been advised that if a young person is taken to hospital, one leader should accompany the young person so as to leave at least one leader with the rest of the group.
- An on-call Galway Community Circus' liaison person will be appointed.
- Access to money will be organised for leaders in case of an emergency.
- Leaders should point out any health and safety concerns they have to the organisers. • A balance needs to be struck between the members' privacy and the necessity of supervision, especially when they are in the accommodation. For example, leaders will be instructed to knock before entering a room and to avoid being alone with a young person if at all possible.

SECTION 4: Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

Galway Community Circus has recruitment and selection procedures that ensure, as far as possible, the safety and protection of children and young people. In the event of Galway Community Circus employing full or part time staff, it is committed to ensuring that recruitment procedures are fair, open and transparent and comply with relevant employment legislation. Personal information received is dealt with in the strictest confidence.

SECTION 4.1: Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

Galway Community Circus will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary)
- Posts will be advertised widely
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary
- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two representatives through an interview process
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed
- 'Risk' would include: any child-related convictions, refusal to sign the application and declaration forms, insufficient documentary evidence of identification, concealing information on one's suitability to working with children
- There will be a relevant probationary period of 3 months, after which an employee evaluation will be undertaken
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda Vetting and this will be sought within the probationary period. Employees should be aware that continuing in employment is dependent on the outcome of the garda vetting application process. All employees can be expected to be treated fairly as outlined in the section on garda vetting below. Galway Community Circus can request an employee be revetted at a future date.
- It is the policy of the youth theatre to provide contracts to all employees.

GARDA VETTING

Galway Community Circus is a member of The National Association for Youth Drama (NAYD), the development organisation for youth theatre/drama in Ireland's garda vetting consortium for affiliated members. NAYD is a registered organisation with the Garda Central Vetting Unit. We have adopted the following good practice guidelines in relation to garda vetting:

- Galway Community Circus has nominated a Designated Person who will manage garda vetting. NAYD has been provided with the name and contact details of this person.
- Garda vetting applications will be submitted to NAYD within the employee/volunteers probationary /trial period.
- Galway Community Circus recognises that garda vetting is only one element of good recruitment practice and will also validate identity, check references, request a signed declaration etc. as outlined in the Recruitment and Selection section of these guidelines.
- Once NAYD receives garda vetting application forms back from the Garda Central Vetting Unit, they are forwarded to Galway Community Circus' Designated Person
- Galway Community Circus recognises that these forms contain personal details and are

governed by data protection regulations. Galway Community Circus' confidentiality policy will be adhered to.

- Galway Community Circus recognises that it can't share information in relation to employees/volunteers' garda vetting applications with other organisations. It is also recognised that clearance letters cannot be issued to individuals. However, we also recognise that individuals do have a right to a copy of any information we hold on them, as outlined in data protection legislation.

THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED IF A DISCLOSURE OF A CONVICTION /PROSECUTION IS RETURNED:

If the individual being vetted has a conviction or prosecution on their record, the Designated Person will receive what is known as a disclosure letter. This letter will include the following details:

- The date the conviction was recorded e.g. date of court appearance - Details of the court e.g. circuit court or district court etc.
- Details of the Offence
- Court Result e.g. details of a fine or a custodial sentence etc.
- The first step the Designated Person takes is to confirm with the individual in question that the information on the disclosure letter does in fact relate to him /her. • The individual in question should be given a chance to respond to the disclosure. NAYD's Authorised Signatory (AS) can advise on good practice and can help interpret what the conviction means and what the severity/leniency of the sentence indicates about the nature of the offence. The AS can also contact the GCVU for further clarification if necessary.
- If the individual in question disputes the disclosure, the Designated Person will ask NAYD's Authorised Signatory to re-submit the applicant's form along with a letter explaining the grounds of the dispute to the Central Vetting Unit. The GCVU will conduct further checks.
- If a conviction/prosecution is confirmed, it is the responsibility of Galway Community Circus to make the decision regarding the individual's suitability to continue in their role with the organisation. While we will not knowingly employ any individual who poses a threat to the wellbeing of our members, we are aware that the fact a person has a conviction/ prosecution on their record, should not automatically disqualify them from working with the organisation. It is our responsibility to make a decision with regard to their future role in the group. As advised by the Garda Vetting Unit and NAYD, disclosures should be managed within a legislative, human rights and natural justice framework.
- The DP can seek advice from NAYD's Authorised Signatory (AS) on good practice, but the AS cannot make the decision for the organisation.
- The following mechanisms have been put in place for making decisions:
 - The welfare committee of Galway Community Circus will meet
 - While the process will be documented, any information will be kept on a 'need to know' basis with any reports generated being stored securely with limited access. Galway Community Circus is mindful that an individual's reputation and livelihood is at stake.
- The following factors will be taken into account when making a decision:
 - The nature of the offence
 - The outcome of the legal proceedings. Sentences are a good guide to the severity of the crime.
 - The age of the individual when they committed the offence - Whether there is more than one offence on their record.
 - The nature of their role in the organisation.
 - Is the conviction relevant to their work?
 - Whether they declared the offence on their Garda Vetting application form and on any declaration of suitability
- The employee/volunteer will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible

Job Description:

A detailed job description is prepared before each post is advertised and is available to all applicants. Each job description includes:

- Job title
- Location of the position
- Who the employee will report to
- Overall purpose of the job
- Key area of work
- Duties and responsibilities
- Conditions of employment
- Person specification outlining:
 - Qualifications
 - Skills
 - Experience
 - Other attributes required to carry out satisfactorily

Advertising

All posts are publicly advertised. All advertisements should include the following:

- Name and role of the organization
- Job title
- Brief description of the job
- Location of the position
- Qualifications and experience, which are desirable and which are essential
- Whether the position is full, part time, temporary or permanent
- How to apply
- How to get further information
- Closing date
- Equal opportunities statement
- Logos where applicable

Short Listing

A short-listing panel with a minimum of two people will be set to review all applications. The selection criteria are based on the information in the advertisement and the job description. Assessment of applications is based only on information provided by the applicant. All applications that meet the selection criteria are invited to attend an interview. A letter of regret is sent to all applications that do not meet the criteria. A complete report of the short-listing process is prepared.

Interviews

An interview panel with a minimum of two people is selected by the Board and always includes at least one member of the short-listing panel. Where possible, both sexes are represented on the interview panel. Each member of the panel is supplied with the applications and CV's in advance. A list of interview questions based on the job description is prepared in advance of the interviews. The panel decides in advance who will cover each area. Each candidate is asked the same questions. At the end of each interview the candidate is invited to ask questions or give any additional information. A marking system and score sheet are also prepared. When the interviews are completed the interview panel prepares a full report of the interview process. The report is signed by each

member of the panel and is kept on file for at least one year together with the shortlisting report and interview score sheet.

Selection Process

The position is offered to the candidate with the highest mark on the score sheet, subject to references being satisfactory. A reference is always sought from the current or most recent employer. Both references are contacted verbally by telephone and a written reference check-up form is completed and stored. Letters of regret are sent to all unsuccessful candidates within one week of interviews.

Contract of Employment

A written contract of employment is prepared for each new employee. All contracts include:

- Commencement date of employment
- Duration of contract
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Reporting procedures
- Salary
- Working hours
- Annual leave
- Details of sick pay
- Information on grievance and disciplinary procedures □ Information on codes of behaviour
- Duration of probationary.

SECTION 4.2: Support/Training of Staff

Galway Community Circus is aware that the responsible management of staff and volunteers involves having procedures in place to cover training, induction, supervision and the review of work practices.

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, Galway Community Circus has put the following mechanisms in place for supporting employees:

- ⤴ All staff and volunteers must receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices. Galway Community Circus' Project Manager is responsible for supervising staff. There will be regular check in meetings with employees. Employees will deliver reports on their work to board meetings.
- ⤴ All staff and volunteers must take part in a mandatory induction training session and are made aware of the organisation's policies and procedures and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern.
- ⤴ We will endeavour to support the skill development and training of the employee as resources allow.
- ⤴ Child protection training will be provided/sourced for all staff who have direct contact with young people.
- ⤴ We will encourage employees to avail of opportunities to meet up with other youth circus / arts leaders both locally and nationally.

Induction

An induction is provided for all new employees. Employees are provided with:

- Information about the role of the Galway Community Circus
- Further information about the new employee's role

- Information on the role of other employees □ Introduction to key personnel and agencies
- Contracts of employment
- Details of conditions to employment
- Details of salary scale
- Details of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Details of codes of behaviour
- Full details of policies and procedures
- Employees are obliged to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures of Galway Community Circus and to sign up to the codes of behaviour as set out by Galway Community Circus

SECTION 4.3: Selection and Support of Volunteers

The board of Galway Community Circus is aware of the central importance of volunteers to the organisation and will seek to support their participation. We also recognise the need for a robust selection process and will adhere to the recruitment process for employees outlined above with the following exceptions:

- We will issue a role description rather than a job description. This will state the nature of the role but also the qualities of the person we are seeking.
- Applicants will be asked to complete a volunteer information form.
- Volunteers will have a trial period to assess their suitability for the role
- Rather than a formal interview, potential volunteers will be met by two representatives from Galway Community Circus for a less formal meeting. Reference checking, declarations and garda vetting still apply.

Volunteer Recruitment Policy

Galway Community Circus is committed to ensuring that the recruitment of volunteers is open and transparent and at all times gives precedence to the safety and welfare of children/young people attending classes and events. Galway Community Circus will ensure that volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary)
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form
- Candidates will be required to consent to Garda Vetting and this will be sought for all staff and volunteers in direct contact with young people
- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be selected
- 'Risk' would include: any child-related convictions, refusal to sign the application and declaration forms, insufficient documentary evidence of identification, concealing information on one's suitability to working with children
- There will be a relevant probationary period of 3 months, after which a volunteer evaluation will be undertaken

Role Description:

- Overall role of the volunteer
- Location of the position
- Who the volunteer will report to
- Key area of work
- Duties and responsibilities

Application Form:

Each volunteer is required to complete an application form. This form includes:

- Name, address and telephone no of the applicant
- Previous experience
- Reason for volunteering
- Name, address and telephone number of two referees

Interview/Informal Chat

Each volunteer will have an interview/informal chat with two representatives of the Galway Community Circus as part of the recruitment process.

Declaration/Garda Vetting

Garda Clearance is sought for all volunteers in direct contact with young people. All new volunteers must provide documentation confirming their identity.

Induction

An induction period is provided for all new volunteers. Volunteers are provided with:

- Information about the role of the Galway Community Circus
- Further information about the volunteer's role
- Information on the role of other volunteers and employees
- Details of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Details of codes of behaviour
- Full details of policies and procedures

Volunteers are obliged to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures of Galway Community Circus and to sign up to the codes of behaviour as set out by Galway Community Circus.

SECTION 4.4: Support/Training of Volunteers

Galway Community Circus will support our volunteers in the following way:

- Project Manager / Administrator Staff will meet with volunteers on a regular basis to discuss how they are getting on.
- Volunteers will receive induction in all policies and procedures.
- We will endeavour to support the skill development and training of the volunteer as resources allow.
- Child protection training will be provided/sourced for all volunteers who have direct contact with young people.
- We will encourage volunteers to avail of opportunities to meet up with other youth circus / arts leaders both locally and nationally.

SECTION 5: Health and Safety

SECTION 5.1: Health and Safety Statement

Galway Community Circus' Safety Statement:

Galway Community Circus is aware of the duty of care it holds towards its members and employees/volunteers and the importance of providing a safe environment for all our activities. The following measures have been taken to help ensure the safety of all involved and to minimise the level of risk to which they are exposed:

- An annual risk assessment will be carried out. This means that:
 - Potential risks are identified and assessed
 - Steps to negate/minimise the risk are identified
 - All reasonable steps are taken to deal with the potential risk
 - This process is fully documented.
- Galway Community Circus Director Dave Donovan together with the Project Manager Ulla Hokkanen have been identified as the people responsible for health and safety in the organisation
 - A Safety Statement has been prepared and is reviewed on a regular basis
 - All staff and volunteers must be familiar with the Safety Statement
- A well-stocked First Aid kit is available during all Galway Community Circus' activities
 - The location of the first-aid box(es) is known to staff
- First Aid training has been provided for leaders
 - Galway Community Circus maintains an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation
- Leaders have been provided with contact details for local doctors/local Gardaí
- Galway Community Circus has developed an Incident/Accident Report Form and this is made available to all leaders
- Fire drills are organised by St. Joseph's Community Centre Fire Safety Officer
- An attendance list is taken for all activities
- Adequate Public and Employer Liability Insurance cover is in place. Our insurance company is kept up to date with our activities and informed of any activities that may not be covered under Galway Community Circus' annual cover.
 - External organisations with whom the Galway Community Circus has dealings must provide proof of public liability insurance
 - Children and young people are supervised by adults at all times
 - Care is taken to ensure no child can leave the venue undetected
 - Venue staff must know which children are present at any one time, where feasible
 - There are at least two adults in the premises at all times
 - Children and young people are advised of risks involved during workshops
 - Galway Community Circus record details of risky equipment and or exercises used and take steps to minimise risk
- Any exercises/activities that involve increased level of risk are only carried out with appropriate supervision by those with specialist expertise. Members are discouraged from practicing any such activities without adequate supervision.
 - Furniture and equipment are laid out to minimize safety risk
 - Only suitable and age appropriate objects are available to children
- Leaders/Members are trained in manual handling techniques before they move sets, heavy props etc.
- Health and safety is discussed regularly at board meetings.

In the event of an accident:

- The first aid box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location known to adults

- Substances, which may cause allergies, are not included in the first aid box
- Medical supplies in the first aid box are checked regularly, by a designated person to ensure that any out of date or missing items are replaced
- At least one member of the team who holds an up to date first aid certificate is at a venue at all times
- In the event of an accident/illness where a young person has to be brought to a doctor/hospital, all reasonable efforts will be made to adhere to recommended supervision ratios.
- Records are accessible to all members of relevant staff in case of an emergency
- Minor accidents are treated at the venue and parents/guardians will be informed of the injury and the action taken when the child/young person is collected
- All accidents including minor ones are recorded in the Accident Book
- In case of a serious accident the workshop leader will phone the doctor and child's/young person's parent/guardian
- If the child/young person has to go to hospital before the parent/guardian arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to the hospital and stay until the parent/guardian arrives
- All accidents must be reported to the insurance company

Fire Safety Policy

It is the policy of the Galway Community Circus to ensure that all adequate measure are put in place to ensure that children, parents, staff and all other persons attending the Galway Community Circus are safe in the event of a fire.

Fire Safety Procedures:

- All fire safety recommendations and arrangements will be implemented in accordance from instructions arising from discussions with the local Fire Chief and Fire service
- Staff, adults and children are to be made aware of the evacuation procedures at each venue in the event of a fire
- Staff/volunteers and temporary staff are to be informed as to what procedures to follow in the event of a fire
- Assembly points should be marked clearly
- Fire safety equipment should be checked to make sure that the annual check has been carried out and that the records support this by recording inspection dates

SECTION 6: Child Protection and Dealing with Suspected Abuse

SECTION 6.1: Duty of Care

Galway Community Circus is committed to safeguarding its members from abuse from within the organisation but also recognises the duty it has in relation to dealing with any suspected abuse/disclosures of abuse from its members. Galway Community Circus recognises that the welfare of the child/young person is of paramount importance in all cases of suspected/alleged abuse. In order to ensure Galway Community Circus meets its obligations, the following procedures have been put in place:

- The board/committee is aware of its responsibility as outlined in Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011).
- A Designated Person for Welfare/Child Protection has been nominated. The current Designated Person is Ulla Hokkanen and she can be contacted at 085 1117224. A Deputy Designated Person has also been nominated should the Designated Person be unavailable. The Deputy Designated Person is Dave Donovan and he can be contacted at 085 2416971.
- We have established a welfare committee with Designated Person Ulla Hokkanen and Deputy Designated Person Dave Donovan, the third member of the committee is the resident Youth Circus Co-ordinator. It is the role of this committee to support and advise the Designated Person, to ensure that appropriate child protection reporting mechanisms are in place and to ensure that all procedures and policies in relation to child protection are reviewed and updated in line with national guidelines and legislation.
- Awareness has been raised among all staff and volunteers of the possibility of members suffering abuse both from within and outside the organisation and their responsibility to report such abuse.
- All staff/volunteers who have direct contact with young people have received training in child protection. Training for new staff/volunteers, who have not previously received child protection training, will be provided/sourced within three months of their commencement.
- All staff/volunteers who have direct contact with young people, will be given the following information:
 - Best practice on dealing with suspected/alleged abuse or a disclosure of abuse as outlined in Children First (2011). (Detailed below)
 - Definitions of abuse as outlined in Children First (2011).
 - Signs and symptoms of abuse as outlined in Children First (2011).
 - Details of standard reporting procedures as outlined in Children First (2011).
 - Guidance on confidentiality as outlined in Children First (2011).
 - Details of Galway Community Circus' internal reporting procedures including who they should contact if they have a child protection concern. (Detailed below) - Standard reporting forms will be made available to all staff/volunteers. (Attached to this document)
- Staff/volunteers have been advised not to investigate suspected child abuse themselves
- Staff/volunteers have been instructed never to confront an alleged abuser.
- Galway Community Circus is committed to following good practice in relation to confidentiality and child protection. All staff/volunteers have been instructed on the importance of confidentiality.
- Galway Community Circus is aware that the criminal dimension of child abuse cases cannot be ignored.
- Galway Community Circus has put in place procedures for dealing with allegations against staff/volunteers as detailed below.

The following role description has been agreed for the Designated Person, as adapted from The Code of Good Practice: Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (2003):

The Designated Person should:

- Operate within the guidelines set by the appropriate authorities and those approved by his/her organisation.
 - Report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the statutory authorities, i.e. the HSE or An Garda Síochána.
 - Liaise between the organisation, young people, staff and the statutory authorities where necessary.
 - Create and maintain links with the statutory authorities and other relevant agencies and resource groups.
 - Facilitate the provision of support to any victim, volunteer or employee making a referral and provide support also to the person against whom the allegation has been made.
 - Advise the organisation, members or staff on individual cases.
 - Advise on good practice.
 - Organise /facilitate training and workshops on guidelines in Child Protection. • maintain proper records on all cases referred to him/her in a secure and confidential manner.
 - Keep up-to-date on current developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy.
- The Designated Person will be supported in this role by the welfare committee and will report to the Chairperson of Galway Community Circus.

SECTION 6.2: Recognising Child Neglect/Abuse

The following is adapted from Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. All staff/volunteers should familiarise themselves with what is contained here and also the definitions and indicators of abuse as attached to this document.

Three stages in the identification of child abuse have been identified:

Stage 1: Considering the possibility.

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. It should also be considered if the child seems distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. The possibility of child abuse should also be considered if the child displays unusual or fearful responses to primary parents/carers or older children. A pattern of ongoing neglect should also be considered even when there are short periods of improvement.

Stage 2: Looking for signs of neglect or abuse

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. They can exist in the relationships between children and primary carers or between children and other family members/other persons. A cluster or pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of neglect or abuse. Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed and sometimes make direct disclosures. Disclosures should always be taken very seriously and should be acted upon, for example, by informing the HSE Children and Family Services. The child should not be interviewed in detail about the alleged abuse without first consulting with the HSE Children and Family Services. This may be more appropriately carried out by a social worker or An Garda Síochána. Less obvious signs could be gently explored with the child without direct questioning. Play situations, such as drawing or story-telling, may reveal information.

Some signs are more indicative of abuse than others. These include:

- Disclosure of abuse and neglect by a child or young person.
- Age-inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge.
- Injuries or patterns of injuries.
- Absconding from home or a care situation.
- attempted suicide

- Underage pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.
- Signs in one or more categories at the same time. For example, signs of developmental delay, physical injury and behavioural signs may together indicate a pattern of abuse. Many signs of abuse are non-specific and must be considered in the child's social and family context. It is important to be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse

Stage 3: Recording of information

If neglect or abuse is suspected and acted upon, for example, by informing the HSE Children and Family Services, it is important to establish the grounds for concern by obtaining as much information as possible. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information that may be relevant. Care should be taken as to how such information is stored and to whom it is made available

SECTION 6.3: Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The following is taken from the *HSE Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (2011): What constitutes reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern?

- An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse.
- Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- Admission or indication by someone of an alleged abuse.
- A specific indication from a child that he or she is being abused.
 - Evidence (e.g. injury or behaviour) that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to have been caused in any other way.

It is recommended that a referral to Children and Family Services should always be made in the following circumstances:

- Any concern about a child at risk of sexual abuse
- Physical injury caused by assault or neglect which may or may not require medical attention
- Incidents of physical abuse that alone are unlikely to constitute significant harm, but taken into consideration with other factors may do so
- Children who suffer from persistent neglect
- Children who live in an environment which is likely to have an adverse impact on their emotional development
- Where parents' own emotional impoverishment affects their ability to meet their child's emotional and/or physical needs, regardless of material/financial circumstances and assistance
- Where parents' circumstances are adversely affecting their capacity to meet the child's needs because of domestic violence, drug and/or alcohol misuse, mental health problems, intellectual disability,
- A child living in a household, with, or having significant contact with, a person at risk of sexual offending or with previous convictions against children
- An abandoned child
- Children left home alone
- Bruising/ injury to a pre-mobile baby
- Pregnancy where children have been previously removed
- Suspicion of fabricated or induced illness
- Where a child under one year is present in a home where domestic violence is a concern.

Please note: The above are examples of circumstances that may occur. There are other circumstances under which a referral should be considered. If you are in any doubt, discuss your concern with your Designated Person or call a member of your local HSE Children and Family Services' Duty Social Work Team for an informal consultation.

Questions that may help staff/volunteers when they are concerned about a child's welfare:

- Is the child behaving normally for his or her age and stage of development?
- Does the child present a change in behaviour?
- For how long has this behaviour been observed?
- How often does it occur? Where?
- Has something happened that could explain the child's behaviour?
- Is the child showing signs of distress? If so, describe (e.g. behavioural, emotional, physical signs)
- Does the behavior happen everywhere or just in the school or childcare setting?
- Is the child suffering?
- Does the behavior restrict the child socially?
- Does the behaviour interfere with the child's development?
- What effect, if any, does it have on others (e.g. other children)?
- What are the child's parent(s) views, if known?

(Taken from the *HSE Child Protection and Welfare Practice Book*.
Original source: *Barnardo's Ireland Child Protection Information Pack*)

Types of child abuse

This chapter outlines the principal types of child abuse and offers guidance on how to recognise such 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. 2.1.2

In the *Children First: National Guidance*, 'a child' means a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married.

Definition of 'neglect'

Neglect can be defined in terms of an *omission*, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child.

Whether it is *significant* is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways *over a period of time* rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition.

A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

The *threshold of significant harm* is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

Definition of 'emotional abuse'

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the *relationship* between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples may include:

- (i) the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- (ii) conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- (iii) emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;
- (iv) unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- (v) premature imposition of responsibility on the child;

- (vi) unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
- (vii) under- or over-protection of the child;
- (viii) failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- (ix) use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- (x) exposure to domestic violence;
- (xi) Exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The *threshold of significant harm* is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become *typical* of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Definition of 'physical abuse'

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Physical abuse can involve:

- (i) severe physical punishment;
- (ii) beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- (iii) pushing, shaking or throwing;
- (iv) pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- (v) terrorising with threats;
- (vi) observing violence;
- (vii) use of excessive force in handling;
- (viii) deliberate poisoning;
- (ix) suffocation;
- (x) fabricated/induced illness (*see Appendix 1 for details*);
- (xi) Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

Definition of 'sexual abuse'

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- (i) exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- (ii) intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- (iii) masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- (iv) sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- (v) Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse;
- (vi) Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

SECTION 6.4: Handling a Disclosure of Abuse

Galway Community Circus recognises the possibility that a member may disclose an abuse/abuses perpetrated against him/her. It is essential that they feel supported in what may be an extremely traumatic experience for them. We recognise that a disclosure may be made to any adult/or other member involved in the organisation. All staff/volunteers in Galway Community Circus have been made aware of the good practice guidelines below and Galway Community Circus members have been instructed to talk to an adult leader should they have a concern about another member.

The following good practice guidelines on handling a disclosure of abuse has been adapted from Code of Good Practice – Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (2003): - React calmly, as over-reacting may alarm the young person and compound feelings of anxiety and guilt

- Listen carefully and attentively; take the young person seriously
- Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in telling
- Do not make false promises, particularly regarding secrecy
- Do not ask the young person to repeat the story unnecessarily
- Ask questions only for the purpose of clarification. Be supportive, but do not ask leading questions or seek intimate details beyond those volunteered by the child. Detailed investigative interviews will, if necessary, be carried out by HSE staff or members of the Garda Síochána.
- Check with the young person to ensure that what has been heard and understood by you is accurate.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Record the conversation as soon as possible in as much detail as possible.
- Sign and date the record
- Explain and ensure that the young person understands the procedures which will follow
- Pass the information to the Designated Person, who will in turn report it to the HSE

SECTION 6.5: Internal Reporting Procedures

Galway Community Circus has adopted the following internal reporting procedures should an employee/volunteer have a child protection concern:

- Any staff member/volunteer who has a serious concern or suspicion/received a disclosure of abuse should contact Galway Community Circus' Designated Person immediately. They should proceed to create a written report outlining the reasons for their suspicions/details of the disclosure with as many facts as possible recorded. The report should be given to Galway Community Circus' Designated Person.
- If the Designated Person is unsure of whether to make a formal report, they can contact the HSE for an informal consultation. They can also consult the Galway Community Circus' welfare committee
- If a decision is taken to make a report Galway Community Circus' Chairperson should be informed
- The Designated Person should follow the standard reporting procedures as outlined in Children First (2011) without further delay.
- Confidentiality guidelines should be adhered to. Details should only be provided to those with a direct need to know.
- The Designated Person will need to consider whether to inform the primary carers that a report is being made. They should not do this if they believe that doing so puts the young person in danger. It is recommended that they consult the HSE.
- If a decision is taken not to report, confidential written records of how and why this decision was taken, should be retained. Any incident reports should be retained. It may be that a report will be made in the future in light of other developments.

- The staff member/volunteer who made the original report should be informed of the decision taken. If a report hasn't been made, they should be provided with the reasons for this decision in writing and informed that they can still make a report in their personal capacity. All staff/volunteers will be made aware of the steps necessary to make a report and the provisions of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act (1998), which offers protection from civil liability for anyone who makes a report, once they are acting in good faith.
- The staff member/volunteer should continue to keep an eye on the young person involved. They should record information that they feel is relevant and continue to liaise with the Designated Person. While they should make themselves available to the young person, they need to be sensitive and not intrusive. It is important that they don't suggest or tell the young person that they think abuse is taking place. All involved should continue to be open to alternative explanations for what they have observed.

SECTION 6.6: Standard Reporting Procedures

Galway Community Circus has adopted the following standard reporting procedures as taken directly from Children First. The Designated Person and any other individual making a report should adhere to it.

- Any person reporting a child abuse concern should do so without delay to the Child Welfare and Protection Services of the HSE. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. The contact number for the Galway Community Circus' local HSE office is (091) 546366 /370/ 325 /369 (Western Health Board Social Work Department).
- Before deciding whether or not to make a formal report, you may wish to discuss your concerns with a health professional or directly with the Children and Family Services of the HSE.
- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending HSE intervention. In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the HSE, you should contact the Gardaí. This may be done through any Garda station. (Galway Garda Station / 091 538000)
- The Standard Report Form should be used by professionals, staff and volunteers in organisations working with or in contact with children, or providing services to children when reporting child welfare and protection concerns to the Children and Family Services of the HSE. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the HSE.

SECTION 6.7: Handling an allegation against a staff member / volunteer

Galway Community Circus is committed to following best practice should an allegation of abuse be made against a staff member or volunteer. The good practice guidelines below are adapted from Code of Good Practice: Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (2003).

- Galway Community Circus recognises the dual responsibility it holds in respect of both the young person and the volunteer/employee.
- Galway Community Circus will, as a matter of urgency, take any necessary protective measures to ensure that no member is exposed to unnecessary risk.
- We recognise there are two procedures to be followed when allegations of abuse are made against volunteers or employees
 - The reporting procedure in respect of the child
 - the procedure for dealing with the staff member/volunteer in question.
- The Designated Person will have responsibility for the young person and ensuring that reporting procedures are followed.
- The Chairperson will have responsibility for handling the allegation made against the employee /volunteer.

- If an allegation is made against an employee /volunteer, the matter should be reported to the Chairperson as soon as possible.
- Every effort should be made to ensure all the facts are examined and that no assumptions are made with regard to the outcome of any investigation.
- All allegations should be assessed promptly and carefully.
- It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the HSE. This decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern as outlined earlier in this document.
- The first priority should be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The Chairperson should, as a matter of urgency, take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee financially or otherwise, unless this action is necessary to protect children. Galway Community Circus will seek legal advice in relation to any contractual issues. • If a decision is made to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Person should follow the standard reporting procedure (outlined below) in respect of the young person. • The Chairperson will inform the employee/volunteer that an allegation has been made and explain the nature of that allegation.
- The employee should be afforded the right to respond in accordance with Galway Community Circus' disciplinary/appeals procedure.
- The response of the employee should be noted and passed to the HSE if a formal report is being made. The Chairperson should also notify the HSE or any other organisation working with children with which the alleged abuser is thought or known to be involved.
- The parents/carers of the young person should be informed immediately of the complaint against the employee, unless by doing so you endanger the young person. Advice should be taken from the HSE as to how this might best be done.
- The follow-up on an allegation of abuse against an employee should be made in consultation with the HSE and An Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting should be arranged with these two agencies for this purpose
- After the consultations referred to above have taken place, and when pursuing the question of the future position of the employee, the Chairperson should advise the employee of the situation and should follow the agreed procedures.
- Galway Community Circus should ensure that any actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by the HSE or An Garda Síochána. Galway Community Circus will maintain close liaison with the relevant authorities to maintain this co-operation
- The person accused will need support pending an investigation. The organisation should seek advice on the best way to do this. Legal advice should be sought.
- Detailed records should be kept to include
 - details of any allegations made
 - details of how the allegations were managed
 - any action taken and decisions made.
- It is necessary that these records are stored confidentially with restricted access.
- Even if no legal action is taken, Galway Community Circus can still decide that a staff member/volunteer is unsuitable to continue their work with the organisation. Legal advice should be sought.
- If the allegation turns out to be unfounded, consideration will be given to how Galway Community Circus can support all those involved including the person who made the allegation. Advice may be sought from outside agencies.

APPLICATION OF FAIR TREATMENT

Galway Community Circus is committed to the fair treatment of any staff member/volunteer involved in any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Guilt will not be presumed. Galway Community Circus is aware that reputations and livelihoods are at stake and that there is an essential need for confidentiality in such circumstances

APPROACH/PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHERE AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST ANOTHER YOUNG PERSON

Galway Community Circus recognises the possibility of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of Galway Community Circus. The need for extreme sensitivity in such cases is acknowledged.

- The Designated Person should seek advice from the HSE when dealing with allegations of peer abuse.
- If an allegation is made against another young person, it will be considered a child protection issue for both the young people involved. Child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser.
- As advised by Children First (2011), if it is felt there is a conflict between the welfare of the alleged abuser and that of the victim, the welfare of the victim should be viewed as of paramount importance.
- Galway Community Circus' reporting procedures should be followed. Standard reporting procedures should be followed if a decision is taken to report.
- The parents/guardians of the young people concerned should be informed immediately. The Designated Person should seek advice from the HSE as to how this might best be done.
- Decisions regarding the future participation in the youth organisation of the young person alleged to have committed abuse should be carefully considered and advice may be sought from outside areas.

SECTION 7: Confidentiality

Galway Community Circus is committed to following best practice in relation to confidentiality and recognises the responsibility it holds as a data collector and holder of sensitive personal information.

Galway Community Circus holds the following confidential information:

- personal details of members such as contact details, medical conditions etc.
- personal details of employees such as PPS numbers
- personal details of volunteers
- garda vetting disclosures
- accident/incident report forms
- reports on child protection concerns

How we deal with confidential information:

- Confidential Information is stored in Galway Community Circus' office in St Joseph's Community Centre, Shantalla, Galway.
- Access to this location is controlled by key which is held by Galway Community Circus' Administration Staff.
- Access to confidential information is only on 'a need to know' basis.
- Workshop leaders are provided with information such as contact details for members, details of relevant medical/other conditions, as this information is required by them. They are instructed to treat this information with sensitivity and care.
- Confidential information held on a computer is password protected. We are committed to the following data protection guidelines:
 - Obtain and process information fairly
 - Keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes
 - Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was initially given
 - Keep it safe and secure
 - Keep it accurate and up-to-date.
 - Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
 - Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes
- Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual, on request.

(Source: <http://www.dataprotection.ie>.)

RETENTION OF INFORMATION

Galway Community Circus has agreed to the following periods of disc for information. Information that relates to youth theatre members will be retained for six years. Information that related to staff/volunteers will be retained for five years. Financial information is retained for five years. Once these periods, have elapsed, this information will be shredded and disposed of carefully. Computer files will be deleted. It is the responsibility of Galway Community Circus' Project Manager to ensure that these procedures are adhered to.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION

Galway Community Circus adheres to the following which is taken directly from Children First (2011) and should not be changed or adapted:

- The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of the staff in statutory and voluntary organisations involved with children to share and exchange relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

- All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved.
- Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. They are not intended to limit or prevent the exchange of information between different professional staff who have a responsibility for ensuring the protection of children. Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.
- The issue of confidentiality should be part of the training necessary for staff who work in the area of child welfare and protection and the general training of staff in organisations that work with children. Each organisation should have a written policy in this regard.

SECTION 8: Parents/Primary Carers

Galway Community Circus is aware of the necessity of keeping parents/primary carers informed of issues and concerns that relate to their son/daughter. We also recognise the importance of cooperation from parents. The following guidelines for working with parents/carers have been adopted:

- Parents/primary carers will be made aware of the group's policies and procedures. Galway Community Circus has developed an information sheet for parents/carers including details of how they can access policies and who they should contact if they have any concerns. This will be provided to the parents of all members aged under 18 when they join Galway Community Circus. This will include information on how to give feedback and register a complaint with Galway Community Circus.
- Parents/primary carers will be given a copy of the group contract. This includes the rules of the group and the disciplinary procedures a member can expect should they break any of these rules.
- Parents/primary carers will be informed if their young person is ill, or suffers an accident during Galway Community Circus time.
- Parents/primary carers will be sent updates on Galway Community Circus' activities. They will be informed if activities require that their son/daughter need to increase their attendance.
- Consent is required from parents of those under 18 for members' general participation in Galway Community Circus. We also seek additional consent for any activities, such as exchanges and festivals, involving travel away from home. • Parents will be given detailed information on away trips. A meeting will be organised for longer trips or those that involve travel abroad.
- Galway Community Circus requires information from parents/carers with regard to any medical conditions, special needs and any other relevant information that may affect their son/daughter's participation in Galway Community Circus.
- Consent is sought for use of images.
- Galway Community Circus is committed to informing parents/primary carers of any issues that pertain to the welfare of their son/daughter. A decision will be taken not to inform, only if it is felt that doing so will endanger the wellbeing of the young person in question.
- Galway Community Circus welcomes dialogue with parents/primary carers and asks that they contact us, not only if they wish to raise any issues, but also if they would like to find out more about Galway Community Circus and its activities.

INFORMING PARENTS/PRIMARY CARERS AND CHILD PROTECTION:

Galway Community Circus adheres to the principles and procedures of Children First: National Guidance for the Welfare and Protection of Children (2011). The guidelines state that parents should be informed if a welfare/child protection concern is reported to the HSE. Galway Community Circus' Designated Person will seek advice from the HSE on this. The guidelines also state that parents should only be informed if it is believed that doing so would not endanger the child or young person.

The DP should inform the Chairperson if they intend to inform a parent of a report so that an assessment can be made of whether the DP is putting themselves at risk and supports can be put in place.

SECTION 9: Complaints Procedure

Galway Community Circus welcomes feedback and is committed to dealing with any complaints in a fair and efficient manner. We recognise that complaints may come from members, parents and members of the public.

The following procedures have been put in place:

- All complaints will be taken seriously, whether they are made orally or in writing.
- Those receiving complaints should react in a non-judgmental way and follow these procedures.
- Every attempt is made to resolve the complaint at the source and as amicably as possible to the members and parents/guardians satisfaction
- A complaints form will be made available to all involved in the Galway Community Circus. There will also be a comment box made available in all workshops
- Complaints should be made to the workshop leader or a designated member of the Board of Directors, Michelle O'Neill
- Details of oral complaints should be recorded and the accuracy checked with the person who has made the complaint. This record should be passed to Michelle O'Neill
- If the person who receives the report believes that they have dealt with it at source, they should still take a record of it and pass it on to the appropriate person in the Galway Community Circus.
- Complaints will be acknowledged in writing within two weeks.
- In the case of both oral and written complaints, the next step(s) will be explained to the person making the complaint and a projected time-frame in which they can expect a response.
- A decision on the best way of responding to a complaint will be made by Siobhan Butler and Michelle O'Neill.
- Serious complaints, such as those that relate to child protection concerns, may have to be referred to outside agencies such as the Gardai and the HSE.
- If the complaint involves a child protection concern a second separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with child protection policy and procedure • Everyone involved should adhere to confidentiality guidelines.
- If the complaint is made against a member of staff, paid or voluntary, the staff member must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and given full details. They will be treated fairly, supported and given the right of representation.
 - The person who is making the complaint, especially if this is a member, should also be supported. In the case of a member, support will be provided by the Designated Welfare Person, except in a case where he/she is the subject of the complaint.
- Should the person making the complaint wish to appeal the outcome, they will be given an opportunity to do so. Notification of their wish to appeal must be made within two weeks. Galway Community Circus will put a small appeals committee in place. This will involve individuals who were not involved in the original decision. We recognise that we may have to source individuals from outside the organisation for this committee.
- A staff member/volunteer who wishes to appeal a decision should follow the appeals procedure as outlined in the Disciplinary Procedures section.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

The following have been agreed as possible outcomes of the complaints procedure:

- a written or verbal apology
- an explanation as to the reason for the situation that led to the complaint

- a review of the situation that led to the complaint
- an assurance that there will be a change in practice if this is felt necessary. More serious complaints may involve the following:
- a formal investigation. This could take the form of an investigation by senior management or in a more serious case, an outside agency such as the Gardai may have to be brought in.
- it may be that disciplinary procedures may have to be invoked should negligence or bad practice by a staff member or volunteer be indicated. It is important to make sure that this person (as well as the individual who has made the complaint) is informed that they do have the right to have someone to advise and represent them. In the case of a staff member, this could be a trade union rep.

SECTION 10: Disciplinary Procedures/Appeals

Galway Community Circus is committed to a balanced and fair approach in all disciplinary matters involving staff and volunteers. We comply fully with Employment Legislation in our approach with disciplinary procedures. The following are examples of offences which may lead to disciplinary action:

- Abusing a young person.
- Bullying a young person or colleague.
- Breach of Health and Safety rules.
- Refusal to carry out instructions from an authorised person.
- Persistent unsatisfactory work performance, time keeping or attendance.
- Breach of hygiene rules, smoking on the premises.
- Being under the influence of drink or drugs during the working period.
- Falsification of Galway Community Circus' records or documents.
- Stealing or unauthorised disposal of Galway Community Circus' property, misuse of property, materials or equipment.
- Breach of an individual's Contract of Employment.
- Harassment.
- Behaviour, which may bring Galway Community Circus into disrepute.
- Violation of Criminal Law.
- Disorderly or violent conduct while on duty.

PROCEDURES

- All staff/volunteers will be provided with a written copy of disciplinary procedures on commencement of their work with Galway Community Circus.
- Galway Community Circus' Chairperson is responsible for handling disciplinary procedures.
- The staff member/volunteer will be given full details of the allegations or complaints
- They will be given an opportunity to respond in full.
- They will have the right to be represented.
- The Chairperson will give serious consideration to any account given by the individual in question, to the circumstances that led to the disciplinary procedures and to any other relevant factors that pertain.
- The Chairperson may decide to seek outside input or advice. Legal advice will be sought for any disciplinary action that has contractual implications.
- Galway Community Circus accepts that less serious offences can be dealt with on a more informal basis.
- An employee may be suspended on full pay pending the outcome of an investigation into an alleged breach of discipline.
- The employee/volunteer will be informed of a decision as soon as it is made and be informed that they have the right to appeal any disciplinary action. The following disciplinary actions will be at the disposal of the Chairperson:
 - An oral warning
 - A written warning
 - A final written warning
 - Suspension without pay
 - Dismissal
- Dismissal will be a last resort and only used in situations where it is felt that the employee/volunteer poses a threat to the wellbeing of members or where all other disciplinary actions have been used but the employee/volunteer consistently displays the behaviour/ commits the offence that led to the initiation of disciplinary action.
- It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to ensure that all disciplinary procedures are recorded accurately and that all resulting reports are maintained in line with Galway Community Circus' policy.

APPEALS

The following procedure should be followed in relation to appeals:

- Employees/volunteers will be given a period of two weeks in which to lodge an appeal
- The reasons for the appeal should be submitted in writing.
- As it was the Chairperson who handled the original disciplinary action, the appeal will be handled by an independent mediator from outside the organisation.
- A meeting will be arranged with the employee/volunteer and they will be informed in advance that they have the right to bring someone with them to the meeting.
- A confidential written record of this meeting will be kept and maintained in line with Galway Community Circus' policy.
- After a decision has been made, everyone involved will be informed of the outcome in writing.
- If the person involved is an employee, and they are still unhappy with the outcome, they will be informed that they have the right to appeal the case to a Rights Commissioner, the Labour Court and/or the Employment Appeals Tribunal as appropriate.

SECTION 11: Contact Details

CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES:

Designated Person: Ulla Hokkanen 085 1117224

Deputy: Dave Donovan 085 2416971

Western Health Board Social Work Department:

Galway City Local Health Office,
25 Newcastle Road, Galway.
Tel: (091) 546366 /370/ 325 /369
Duty Social Worker 9.30am - 5pm

Health Service Executive Info Line:

1850 24 1850

An Garda Síochána:

Emergency No. 999 or 112

Galway Garda Station,
Mill Street,
Galway City.
Tel: +353 91 538000

National Counselling Service Information Line:

1800 235 234

COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS:

Designated Person: Michelle O'Neill 085 1117224

Directors
Galway Community Circus
C/o St Joseph's Community Centre
Ashe Rd
Shantalla
Galway

SECTION 12.1: Group Contract



Group Contract

THESE RULES ARE IN PLACE TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE & HAPPY

It has been agreed that all our members should:

- Treat each other and the tutors with – No pushing or bullying
- Support each other – Circus is not a competition
- Be open to working with everyone in the group
- Respect each other's personal space and belongings
- Respect each other's cultural, economic, religious and ethnic background

- Listen to the tutors
- Be willing to try new skills and new techniques
- Be reliable and punctual – Arrive on time
- Be careful in the car park. Make sure you are accompanied by an adult to and from the hall
- Respect the space and equipment – tidy up at the end of class
- Stay in the hall during class – ask a tutor if you need to use the toilet

- Be safe
- Always ask for advice if you're not sure how to do something
- Never run with socks on
- Always use a big crash mat when practicing aerial acrobatics
- Never swing on aerial equipment
- Never enter the storage room without permission

- Inform the tutor, or another responsible adult, if you experience any difficulty during classes or events

SECTION 12.2: Internal Reporting Form

GCC Internal Recording Form for Child-Related Issues.

_____ Date Location:_____

Name of Child: _____ DOB: __

Parent/guardian Name: _____

Nature of Concern:

- Unsupervised Other Neglect
- Domestic Violence Other Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse Physical Abuse
- Missing Other (please state)

Further information regarding the concern:

Any previous related incidents?:

Please outline steps taken: (tick as appropriate and state name of contact)

	Name	Contact No.	Spoken to (tick)	Written to (tick)
Designated Person				
HSE				
Gardaí				
RIA				
Parent/ Guardian				
Other				

Other action?

What was the outcome? e.g. action taken

Signed:
Name :

Contact Phone Number: _____

SECTION 12.3 HSE Standard Reporting Form

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE
CONCERNS

In case of emergency or outside Health Service Executive office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Principal Social Worker or Duty Social Worker : _____

1. Details of Child

Name	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address		
Age/D.O.B	School	

1a. Details of Parents

Name of Mother:	Name of Father:
Address of Mother if different to Child:	Address of Father if different to Child:
Telephone Number:	Telephone Number:

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

--

1c. Household Composition

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g school/occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description

of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

--

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name	Age	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address			
Relationship to child		Occupation	

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers	School
Public Health Nurse	Gardaí
G.P	Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club:
Hospital	
Other, specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs:	

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

YES NO If YES, what is their attitude? _____

6. Details of Person reporting concerns (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of Confidentiality)

Name	Occupation
Address	
Telephone Number	
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:	

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name	Date
Occupation	Signed

SECTION 12.4 Child Protection Guidelines and Prompt Sheet for Artists



Child Protection Guidelines and Prompt Sheet for Artists

A guide to the basic teaching practice at Galway Community Circus. It is very important to us that every one of our members is treated with fairness and respect. Please take a moment to read through our basic guidelines for teaching at Galway Community Circus.

- Please arrive 20mins before the start of class to liaise with the other tutors and prepare the hall and equipment.
- Please familiarise yourself with our General Policies, Ground Rules and Child Protection Policy.
- Please wear appropriate clothing (ie. flexible training clothes – no jeans)
- Be sure that you are clear which tutor is leading each activity. Please support the lead tutor at all times. This may mean keeping the participants focused in group activities.
- Galway Community Circus operates a warning system for disruptive participants. After three warnings the participant will be asked to sit out of the class for an appropriate time.
- For safety reasons participants should not climb on the crash mats when they are piled for storage.
- Participants should not run in the hall or practice any circus activities whilst waiting for the class to begin. This is because it can be disruptive and dangerous.
- All participants under the age of 18 must stay in the hall during the class. If a child needs to go to the toilet they must let a tutor know and they will be allowed to use the disabled toilet one at a time. The other toilets at the community center are for adult use only.
- Assist the main tutor to clear the hall at the end of class and tidy away any equipment promptly.
- Keep the store room tidy by returning equipment to its designated place.
- Always feel free to ask if you are unsure about anything.

Have Fun!!

SECTION 12.5 Child Protection Guidelines Information for Parents



Child Protection Guidelines Information for Parents

A guide to the basic practice at Galway Community Circus. It is very important to us that every one of our members is treated with fairness and respect. Please take a moment to read through our guidelines for teaching at Galway Community Circus.

- Please arrive 5 mins before the start of class
- Please familiarise yourself with our General Policies, Ground Rules and Child Protection Policy.
- Galway Community Circus operates a warning system for disruptive participants. After three warnings the participant will be asked to sit out of the class for an appropriate time.
- For safety reasons participants should not climb on the crash mats when they are piled for storage.
- Participants should not run in the hall or practice any circus activities whilst waiting for the class to begin. This is because it can be disruptive and dangerous.
- All participants under the age of 18 must stay in the hall during the class. If a child needs to go to the toilet they must let a tutor know and they will be allowed to use the disabled toilet one at a time. The other toilets at the community center are for adult use only.
- Always feel free to ask if you are unsure about anything.

Have Fun!!

SECTION 12.6 Internal accident report form



Accident/Incident Report Form

Details of Accident/Incident

Date occurred: Time occurred:

What happened?

Location:

Circus Space Rehearsal Space Performance Venue Public space Other

Were there any witnesses?

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____

To whom was the incident/accident reported?

Parent/Guardian Local GP Designated Welfare Person Other _____

Name: _____ Surname _____

Address: _____

Home tel: _____ Mobile : _____

Name: _____ Surname _____

Address: _____

Home tel: _____ Mobile : _____

To whom did the accident occur? Who did the Incident affect?

Circus Member In-House leader Outside Professional Member of the Public

Name: _____ Surname: _____

Home Address _____

Home Tel: _____ Mobile: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Male Female

Did they agree to the suggested course of action? Yes No

Did the incident/accident cause illness/injury? Yes No

Apparent Nature of Injury Part of Body Injured

- Abrasion Concussion Puncture Abdomen Eye L/R Hand L/R
Amputation Cut Scald Ankle L/R Elbow L/R Knee L/R
Asphyxiation Dislocation Scratch Arm L/R Face Leg L/R
Bite Fracture Shock Back Foot L/R Mouth
Bruise Laceration Sprain Chest Finger Neck Burn Poisoning Other Ear L/R
Head Other Explain Other: _____ Explain Other: _____

Describe the nature of the injury (cut, third finger, left hand. etc.)

Treatment Details

None First Aid Local GP/Clinic Accident and Emergency Department

In the case of First Aid:

Who administered First Aid: _____ Contact Number _____

What First Aid was administered: _____

Did the accident occur during a workshop/rehearsal activity? Yes No

Explain

Did the accident involve any props, sets or technical equipment? Yes No

Specify and explain

Was a leader or responsible adult present at accident? Yes No

If no, explain

Details of Person completing this Form

Name: _____ Role or relation to injured/ill party: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

_____ Home Address:

Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____