



Dunamaise Arts Centre

Child Safeguarding Statement

*Latest update: January 2020*

## **I Our Organisation**

The Laois Arts Theatre Company (ltg) trades as Dunamaise Arts Centre and is located at Church Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. Throughout this document and appendices, the company is referred to as Dunamaise Arts Centre or Dunamaise.

Funded by The Arts Council and Laois County Council, Dunamaise is a multi-disciplinary arts centre which comprising a 240-seat auditorium and cinema, an art gallery, workshop spaces and cafe. Dunamaise programmes a wide range of top quality, touring and local performances and events for the whole community and promotes performing and visual arts in the midlands region.

## **II Why we have a Child Protection Statement**

Dunamaise presents work for audiences of all ages, including for audiences under 18 years of age. The organisation also presents work performed by children under the age of 18, either in a local community performing group context or within a school context. We are committed to a child-centred approach in its work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We are fully committed to adhere to all requirements of Children First: National Guidance and any other child protection guidelines issued by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, or any guidelines issued by Tusla concerning Child Safeguarding Statements under section 11(4) of the Children First Act 2015.

### **Staff**

Dunamaise Arts Centre has 3 full time staff and 15 part-time / casual staff.

### III Risk Assessment

Dunamaisé engages with children in three ways:

1. As **audience** members, attending events in the theatres. The vast majority of these bookings are made by parents or teachers and the children attend with parents/guardians and/or teachers as supervisors/chaperones.
2. As **workshop** participants, attending without parents
3. As **performers**, either with local community performing groups or with their schools.

	Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1.	Non-compliance with or lack of awareness of Dunamaisé Child Protection Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff and incoming companies are provided with a copy of the Policy and must adhere to its policies.</li> <li>• All staff are trained by the Designated Liaison Person every two years.</li> <li>• All staff must sign a Declaration Form to state they have read and understood the Child Protection Policy.</li> </ul>
2.	Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla, as outlined in the Child Protection Policy.</li> </ul>
3.	A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff know the procedures to make a referral to Mandated Person or directly to Tusla.</li> </ul>
4.	Receipt of complaint of alleged child abuse where a parent, guardian or teacher is the alleged perpetrator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff know the procedures to make a referral to Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee.</li> </ul>
5.	<p>The following risks may arise due to the use of external stage schools/companies/arts groups/schools/theatre companies of Dunamaisé:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk to child/young person in backstage/dressing room/working venue.</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure risk assessment has been carried out in accordance to Dunamaisé Health and Safety Policy.</li> <li>• Any companies utilising Dunamaisé premises shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be made aware of Adult/Young People ratios in the Child Protection Policy and backstage maximum numbers.</li> <li>○ Be responsible for the review and implementation of their own Child Protection Policy and supporting documents and provide Dunamaisé with a copy of same.</li> <li>○ Ensure parents complete an <i>Emergency Contact Form</i> for each Child, and be responsible for storage of and access to these details in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>○ Any concern relating to these services shall be raised immediately with the Designated Person.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **IV Procedures**

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- **Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service**
- **Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children**
- **Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm**
- **Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla**
- **Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons**
- **Procedure for appointing a relevant person**

All procedures listed are available on the organisation's website or upon request.

Signed by:



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Michelle de Forge  
Director, Dunamais Arts Centre  
057-8663355

**Latest update: January 2020**

# APENDICES

## **Dunamaise Arts Centre**

### Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service

Michelle de Forge has been designated as the person to contact if a member of staff or a member of the public has an issue or concern about any aspect of a child or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of Michelle de Forge to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of Michelle de Forge to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardai where appropriate.

Michelle de Forge can be contacted at Dunamaise Arts Centre, 057-8663355 or on her mobile 086-8551397.

The Deputy Designated person will be Laura Dunne. She can be contacted at Dunamaise Arts Centre and 087-6113962.

#### **Grounds for concern**

Dunamaise Arts Centre has made a copy of *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* available to all staff. Chapter 2 of this document: ***Child Abuse: What is it, How do I recognise it, How do I report it?*** outlines the various types and forms of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Reasonable grounds for concern would include:

- (i) specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;

- (ii) an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are collaborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse (an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour);
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

### **Recording procedures**

An incident book for recording concerns about the protection of children and young people will be kept at Dunamais Arts Centre. Michelle de Forge and the Deputy Designated person will have access to these records. They will be stored in a secure manner and confidentiality will be maintained at all times in accordance with our Confidentiality Statement.

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

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

### **Dealing with a disclosure**

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say;
- don't use leading questions or prompt details
- reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret
- don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily

- explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age appropriate).

### Reporting Procedures

- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed
- Actions and outcomes should be noted;
- All details should be recorded, including date, time, the people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts in the incident book\*
- Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts;
- Inform Michelle de Forge or her deputy if she is unavailable;
- Michelle de Forge may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know basis', (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement)
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, Michelle de Forge will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive.
- Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;
- If Michelle de Forge or the deputy Designated person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly;
- In cases of emergency outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardai. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardai.

\*The above procedures for dealing with and reporting a disclosure should also be applied to all retrospective disclosures.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

We in Dunamais Arts Centre are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality
- total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances)
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

## Dunamaise Arts Centre

### Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children

Dunamaise Arts Centre 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 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 (or more) representatives through an interview process
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed
- Some of the exclusions would include:
  1. Any child related convictions;
  2. Refusal to sign declaration form;
  3. Insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
  4. Concealing information on one's suitability to working with children
- There will be a relevant probationary period;<sup>1</sup>
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available this will be sought
- Legal advice will be sought when developing policy and procedures in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of staff.

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<sup>1</sup> The probationary period will be one year

## **Staff management policy statement**

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, Dunamaise Arts Centre undertakes that

New staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session
- be made aware of the Dunamaise Arts Centre code of conduct, child protection procedures and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with the issues of concern;
- undergo a probationary or trial period.

All staff will

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

## **Dunamaise Arts Centre**

### **Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm**

Dunamaise Arts Centre will ensure that all staff attend training at least once a year where child protection will be covered.

When new staff join the organisation, prior to commencement, they will receive in-house training on the procedures the organisation has for the protection of children.

All staff will receive a copy of Children First: National Guidance for the Protections and Welfare of Children and will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood its provisions and implications.

## Dunamaise Arts Centre

### Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla

The relevant person for reporting child protection concerns is Michelle de Forge. Tusla will be informed if we have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. We may report our concern in person, by telephone or in writing — including by email — to the local social work duty service in the area where the child lives. The contact details for the Tusla social work teams on the Tusla website [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).

Should we be concerned about a child but are unsure whether we should report it to Tusla, we may contact Tusla to informally discuss our concern. This will provide us with an opportunity to discuss the query in general and to decide whether a formal report of the concern to Tusla is appropriate. If the concern is below the threshold for reporting, Tusla may be able to provide advice in terms of keeping an eye on the child and other services that may be more suitable to meeting the needs of the child and/or family.

#### **Information to be provided to Tusla**

We will provide as much information as possible, including as much relevant information as we can about the child, his/her home circumstances and the grounds for concern. These may include:

- The child's name, address and age
- Names and addresses of parents or guardians
- Names, if known, of who is allegedly harming the child or not caring for them appropriately
- A detailed account of the grounds for concern (e.g. details of the allegation, dates of incidents, and description of injuries)
- Names of other children in the household
- Name of school the child attends
- Our names, contact details and relationship to the child and the nature of our engagement with the child in respect of our work at Dunamaise Arts Centre.

## **Dunamaise Arts Centre**

### **Procedure for appointing a relevant person**

Dunamaise Arts Centre will appoint designated person who will be the resource person for any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns and will liaise with outside agencies. The designated liaison person will receive specific child protection training necessary to fulfil this role.

The name and contact details of the designated liaison person will be available to all staff working in Dunamaise Arts Centre. A deputy designated liaison person will assume responsibility when the designated liaison person is not available or on leave.

Currently, the designated person is Michelle de Forge. The deputy designated person is Laura Dunne.

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