

**Erin School of English
Child Protection Policy
Parents Version**

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Child Protection
- 3 Responsibilities and duty to report
- 4 Safer recruitment
- 5 Garda Vetting
- 6 Training
- 7 Health and Safety
- 8 Welfare
- 9 Supervision notes for students under the age of 18

1 Introduction

The Child Protection Officers for Erin School of English are Svetlana Vladovitch and Stacey Pope (Deputy Child Protection Officer {DCPO}). Stacey is located at reception and Svetlana is in the room off the staffroom on the second floor.

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Erin School of English is an English language school for international students wishing to improve their English language skills. We take students from the age of 11 to 18 and there is no maximum upper age limit. Accommodation is in vetted host families and residences.

Who is covered by this policy

All adults who have any contact, in any form, with young persons aged under 18 are covered by this policy. This is a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding – Generally ‘looking after’ the welfare of young people in our care

Child Protection – Protecting children from direct and/or harmful behavior

Young learners – Students under the age of 18

Staff - Any individual employed by the school, on a permanent or temporary basis, or works in the school under the aegis of any other body on behalf of the school who interacts in any way with the students

The Director of Studies is responsible for reviewing and updating the policy in line with local conditions on an annual basis at a minimum, or more frequently if required:

Erin School of English Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:

Updated and reviewed by : _____

Signed : _____

Date of update / review : _____

2 Child Protection

Policy statement

Erin School of English has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, staff provide them with the highest possible standard of care. Erin School of English is committed to devising and implementing policies so that all staff accepts their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to the CPO or DCPO. Erin School of English is committed to ensuring that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have rights in general and in particular the right to protection from all types of abuse. EVERY CHILD (PERSON) MATTERS
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff (paid/unpaid) are covered by this policy and all staff and associated staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person, normally the Child Protection Officer or their deputy.
- all staff and associated staff receive appropriate training
- this policy is disseminated to all staff, read by all staff and understood by all staff.

Erin School of English has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Erin School of English will ensure the safety and protection of all children through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Erin School of English.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18. The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Erin School of English and to allow staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. This policy applies to both real world and online environments.

Policy aims

The aim of the Erin School of English Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the school and to allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues, reporting to the CPO or DCPO those issues deemed serious enough for referral

A child's rights

Anyone under the age of 18 is legally considered to be a child in Ireland

- All children have rights. No one can take away a child's right to be safe from emotional, physical, sexual and any other kind of abuse.
- All children have a voice
- All children have the right to say 'no' if any person tries to do something to them which they feel is wrong.
- All children have the right to be supported against bullies.
- All children must feel they can tell an adult of any incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy.
- All children must know that if they go to an adult for help, they will be listened to seriously and supported.
- All children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safeguarded from harm

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Erin School of English, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any

concerns by reporting these to the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies. Erin School of English ensures all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

No investigation beyond the establishment of facts shall take place by members of staff, including the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies. All possible investigations shall be referred to, conducted by and reported on by the members of TUSLA assigned to the case.

Recording allegations and confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- the Principal and Directors
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- TUSLA
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Information (e.g. incident reports) will be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

3 Responsibilities and duty to report

Duty to report

ALL staff have a duty to report any allegation or suspicion of inappropriate contact with children to the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies. All staff have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures. We expect all staff to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding young learners and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

Failure to comply

Non-compliance with the policy on contact with students under 18 will result in disciplinary procedures. (See disciplinary procedure in staff handbook)

Employers have a duty to, and will remove an individual from any activity where there is risk of harm to children. Employers have a 'duty to refer' the suspicion or allegation of an individual having inappropriate contact with young people to external authorities (TUSLA) where there is risk of harm to children.

Internal enquiries

The Directors will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Garda inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of TUSLA inquiries, Erin School of English will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by TUSLA. In such cases, Erin School of English will reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the Centre Manager CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies and record the incident. You should also ensure the child's group leaders are informed

:

- if you accidentally hurt someone
- if a student seems distressed in any manner
- if a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

4 Safer recruitment

Erin School of English recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children in Erin School of English. Pre-selection checks include the following:

Erin School of English follows a policy of safer recruitment which means:

- References will include a specific enquiry as to whether there is any impediment to the employee being employed in a situation where s/he will have responsibility for the care of or substantial access to children
- All references will be followed up
- A Garda vetting form for each employee will be sent to Marketing English in Ireland
- Staff must provide proof of identity prior to taking up employment with Erin School of English
- Any gaps in CVs must be explained satisfactorily

5 Garda Vetting

It is Erin School of English policy to Garda vet all staff prior to employment. In addition to this it is currently policy to Garda vet the main householder in every host family. Also every other adult member in a host family will complete the Garda Vetting form. References will be followed up for host families and such references will specifically ask if the referee knows of any reason why a particular family is not suitable to host people under the age of 18.

6 Training

The Child Protection Officers have received formal training. All current staff have received training from the Child Protection Officers in the key issues of Child Protection. New staff receive the same training as part of the induction process. All staff sign a declaration that they have received and understood this training and comprehend the importance of the issues raised.

- Erin School of English undertakes to provide training sessions and to promote understanding and awareness of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This will happen
 - via the induction process (see below) with all new members of staff
 - via 'cascade training' provided by the CPOs

- Erin School of English undertakes to review on an annual basis at a minimum the practice and implementation of its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and to provide any such further training as may be deemed necessary
- Erin School of English will assist staff through training to:
 - analyses their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made
 - recognize their responsibilities and demonstrate how to report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse
 - respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
 - work safely and effectively with children.
 - receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing staff about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
 - gain national first aid training (where necessary).

Inductions

All employees will be required to undergo an interview. All employees and will receive an induction, during which:

- checks will be made that self-disclosure forms have been completed.
- qualifications will be substantiated.
- the job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified.
- child protection procedures will be explained and training needs will be identified.
- staff will be asked sign up to Erin School of English's Child Protection policy by signing the Self Declaration form.

Use of photographic/filming equipment

All members of staff should be vigilant and any concerns should to be reported to the Director of Studies and record the incident. There is no intention to prevent teachers/staff using video equipment or photography legitimately as long as permission has been sought from the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies. However:

- group leaders and students must give their written consent to any photography
- any photography/filming must take place in an open, public area and never in isolation
- the reasons why any photography/filming is taking place must be fully explained to those concerned, preferably in recordable writing.

the results of any photography/filming must be carefully stored, controlled and used only for the purpose for which they were intended

7 Health and Safety

Part of providing a safe and secure environment for all of our students and staff means implementing robust health and safety policies, risk assessments and suitable levels of supervision. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy forms one of a suite of Erin School of English policies, including Health and Safety, and they should all be read and considered in their totality. In other words, the health and safety of a young person needs to be considered along with specific child protection issues when considering the whole area of Safeguarding. **All associated policies are in the 'Junior DCF' which all staff must read and which is located in the staff room.**

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are completed for every activity undertaken and are central to effective safeguarding of our students. The Director of Studies ensures that the correct risk assessment is given to relevant staff leading an activity. That staff member reads the risk assessment prior to departure or prior to

starting the activity and signs a master sheet held by the Director of Studies stating that they have read and understood the potential risks involved in the activity and what to do should anything happen. Post activity, the staff member then signs the risk assessment, with any updates deemed necessary, and returns the sheet to the Director of Studies for filing. An EMERGENCY REACTION PLAN is given to every member of staff conducting an activity both on site and off site.

Incident reporting

Staff are reminded during inductions of the importance of recording incidents and 'near misses' and the correct procedure for doing so.

Ratios

Staff/adult to student ratios will be age appropriate and activity appropriate but will never be less than 1:15 for students aged 11 -18. Group leaders will never be made responsible for students who are not in their own group. All extra-school activities shall begin and end at the school.

Road safety

All students, irrespective of age, are given appropriate training during inductions in the area of road safety, crossing roads safely, using pedestrian crossings and so on.

Supervision levels

Students are given guidance in inductions and handbooks as to levels of supervision and in particular curfew times and what they may and may not do in their spare time. Supervision notes are sent to the student's parents at home so that they are aware of what levels of supervision to expect for their son or daughter.

Missing students

Daily registers are kept for all lessons and activities. Teaching staff do classroom checks first thing in the morning to ensure all students are present. Missing students are reported to the Director of Studies who then follows this up with the group leader or with the Accommodation Office who will then contact the host family. An attendance policy is printed in the student handbook and expectations regarding attendance are covered in the student induction

Fire safety

A full fire safety policy is in the policies folder but essentially regular drills are held and fire marshals are appointed. Staff receive training in the use of firefighting equipment and fire risk assessments are completed. Fire safety is covered in inductions for students and staff.

First aid and medical

Four staff members have completed Emergency First Aid training. Medical consent forms are obtained for all students as are personal details forms. Medical information is first relayed to the Registrar or Assistant Registrar. They would then put the information on the computer system in the individual student's record. In addition to this they would provide a report in writing to the relevant Director of Operations concerning any specific medical issues for students in their centre. Parents are advised on the medical consent forms that medicines should be left with host parents for safe supervision and administration. In the case of residential centres, medication is handed to the Director of Operations to be kept in a secure and cool location, to be administered at the appropriate time along with the group leader. A Register of Medicine Administration is kept. A minimum of 1 in 5 staff receives formal First

Aid training from St John's Ambulance. Signs are prominently displayed identifying emergency service contact details and these are also written in all handbooks.

Discipline and boundaries

Disciplinary procedures and possible consequences of poor behaviour are outlined in student and staff handbooks. Curfew times are set and communicated to host families during inspections via supervision notes (examples below) and terms and conditions.

Airport transfers

All drivers used by taxi companies and coach companies have Garda clearance. If a student wants to travel independently from the airport to the host family, we still ask for arrival details so we can ensure the family is in when the student arrives. We also provide the student with information regarding the safest and best way to get to the school. For all students under 18 travelling independently, we recommend either to the agent or to the parent that they have assisted check in and travel as an unaccompanied minor. The taxi company we use provides this service if requested to do so.

8 Welfare

Named person

Our Child Protection Officers are also our Welfare Officers for junior students. Of course, all staff have a responsibility to ensure a good level of welfare support for all students. In the adult school the Director of Studies is the Welfare Officer.

Activities

Activities will be age appropriate. In sporting activities students of roughly similar ages will be put together.

Signs

There will be signs prominently displayed showing who to go to for a welfare or safeguarding issue

9 Supervision notes for parents of students on summer young learner programmes

In Ireland anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child in the eyes of the law. As such, we have an extra care of duty towards this group of students to ensure that their welfare needs are properly met and that they have a safe and secure time with us.

- 1 We hold specific inductions for young learners. This induction covers
 - Laws relating to smoking/alcohol/drugs
 - What to do if they have a problem/who to call/how to call emergency services
 - What to do if they are arrested
 - Curfew times

- How to deal with aggressive behaviour on the street
 - Importance of queuing /saying please / thanks you/ speaking quietly if in buses etc
 - Importance of speaking to us if they have a problem
- 2 We have appropriate numbers of staff trained in first aid
 - 3 We have strict curfew times for students under the age of 18. These curfew times are written in student handbooks and all of our host families are aware of these times. These curfew times are reproduced here.

If you are aged 15 to 17 you must obtain your host family's permission if you wish to stay out and you must be home by 22.00 and you must be home by 22.30

If you are aged 12 to 14 you must not leave the area of your home in the evenings and you must be indoors by 21:00 hours. If you 17 or younger, host families must know where you are at all times.

- 4 Host families are instructed to know of the whereabouts of their young students at all times when they are not in school and to have a contact phone number for them
- 5 If your son or daughter is coming as an individual and not part of a group, specific activity staff will be assigned to take care of them during school hours. During evenings and weekends the host family will act 'in loco parentis'.
- 6 We try to place students in a group in the same physical area so they can walk home together, and we arrange for individual young learners to 'buddy up' with other students near where they live so that they may walk home together
- 7 We take personal details from every student so that we have contact details for a responsible person back home whom we may contact in the event of an emergency
- 8 All members of our staff receive child protection training
- 9 Although we try to place your son or daughter within walking distance of the school, this is not always possible, especially during the summer months.
- 10 Students have access to a 24 hour emergency phone number. This number is printed on the Junior student handbook

Please note, there will be times when your son or daughter is not supervised (for example walking to and from school). We cannot supervise every student 24 hours of the day. That is why we require you to complete the consent letter contained in this package and to send it back to us. However, we hope that the measures we have put in place will mean that your son or daughter has a safe and problem free stay with us Erin School of English.

Reviewed and Updated 31/05/2018

