



Erin School of English

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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1 Introduction

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

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**Phone: 00353 1 878 3684
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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 who 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 : _____

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 DCPOs. 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 DCPOs 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

2 The Erin School of English code of conduct and promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting/ outing environment. Staff will have regular contact with young people and will play a central role in identifying cases where a student needs protection. **All suspicious cases of poor practice must be reported following the guidelines in this document.**

The Erin School of English Code of Conduct

The Erin School of English Code of Conduct is founded on the principle that trust should be created between an adult and students aged under 18 so that a safe school culture is created. We expect all staff to adhere to this Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct is for the safety of both the student and the adult responsible for their care:

- All staff need to set standards and to be excellent role models while interacting with students both within and outside the school (for example be somebody children can trust, use appropriate language, be punctual, be fair and not to have favourites, give clear instructions, know professional boundaries, be positive, react and respond appropriately to a variety of situations)

- All staff need to have appropriate appearance. Without this young people will not show appropriate respect. Refer to the staff handbook for more details on this.
- All staff should refrain from smoking, drinking alcohol and of course taking any form of illegal drug while in anyway interacting with students
- Staff should not swear in front of young learners
- Staff should be aware of Erin School of English guidelines on the use of social networks and misuse of IT. This is covered in more detail later in this policy
- Staff should be aware of appropriate forms of behavior in accommodation, particularly around bedrooms and bathrooms and the right to privacy
- Staff should be aware of the correct action to take with regard to arranging transportation for young learners

This Code of Conduct is built upon in the following sections which give examples of good practice and poor practice.

Good practice

All staff should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote a child's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate. **Remember, following good practice can be as much for the benefit of staff as for the student's benefit.**

Staff should

- work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations by leaving doors ajar in one-to-one consultations or having another student present and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- implement this policy at all times
- remember, other people may misinterpret staff actions, no matter how well intentioned
- challenge unacceptable attitudes of behavior from other members of staff or students
- set an example you wish and expect others to follow
- treat all young people equally, avoiding favourites
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- make the experience of studying with Erin School of English fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- treat all young people (including disabled young people) equally, and with respect and dignity.
- put the welfare of each young person first, before any other considerations.
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young children in your care (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them under any circumstances).
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been freely given. Keep any physical contact with a child brief and don't touch a child anywhere that would normally be covered by a swimming costume.
- use the procedure: demonstrate – ask permission – touch if you have to touch a child – for example to demonstrate a sporting technique. However, it is always best practice to avoid touching at all times and simply to demonstrate the technique.
- try to ensure that other students and if possible other staff members or group leaders are present if physical contact is prolonged or sensitive - for example to comfort a crying child, if someone is injured or if you have to separate fighting children.
- request written consent from the student's group leader and/or the CPO or DCPO if staff are required to transport young people in their cars. **You should avoid doing this alone.**

- ensure you work in pairs with the appropriate gender of staff doing the supervising if students have to be supervised in changing rooms.
- be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people or having evidence of recent activity along these lines present, especially the smell of strong alcohol on the breath..
- give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- recognize the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given. This should be recorded in the incident books provided.
- ensure you know the location of medical consent forms for the administration of emergency first aid (provided you are qualified to do so) or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- recognize if a student is developing a 'crush' on you. Do nothing that might be construed as encouraging this. Inform the CPO or DCPOs. Never flirt with a student or make sexually suggestive or provocative comments, even in fun.

Poor practice.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of staff to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child

Staff should not

- spend time alone with young people away from others.
- betray a situation of trust
- permit abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies)
- share changing rooms, washrooms, toilets or bedrooms with children. Always warn children before entering these places. Avoid being in these places with children unless absolutely necessary, and pay particular attention to avoid being alone with a child in these places. Always make sure you are there with another member of staff of the same sex as the child.
- take young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games or contact, including horseplay
- engage in inappropriate language with young people through writing, phoning, email or internet
- hit, throttle, push, kick or otherwise act aggressively either physically or verbally towards a child even in pretence
- share a room alone with a child without doors ajar to a public, well used space or without other individuals present
- enter children's rooms alone in a residence or invite children into adult private rooms
- take young people to staff's home where they will be alone with staff
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments or threats of any nature beyond referral to the Director of studies or group leaders to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to spend time with you alone and unsupervised

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child concerned and the group leader (written if necessary). There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on staff, talk with him/her about what staff member is doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if the staff is involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. **Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.**

The Erin School of English Code of Conduct Card is issued to all members of staff.

IF IN DOUBT – REPORT IT!

3 Child Protection

Overview

Erin School of English has three fully trained nominated Child Protection Officers, designated the Child Protection Officer (CPO) and the Deputy Child Protection Officers (DCPOs). One of these three officers is available 24 hours a day via the emergency phone. The Child Protection Officers in turn provide training to all members of staff. Their names and contact details are:

Svetlana Vladovitch (CPO) and Stacey Pope (DCPO). Stacey is based at reception and Svetlana in the office off the staff room on the second floor.

Email : svladovitch@erin-school.com
spope@erin-school.com

Phone : 00353 1 878 3684

Emergency numbers : 00353 1 878 3684
00353 879 542675

In the event that you cannot contact the Child Protection Officers you may speak to the Assistant director of Studies, Noel Mahon. You can contact him via the same numbers as above or via email: nmahon@erin-school.com

Defining Child Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. Remember **P.E.N.S.**

Physical Abuse: This is where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning etc. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute as child physical abuse.

Emotional Abuse: This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. Emotional abuse may occur when the young person is constantly criticized, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their

capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Neglect: This occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Sexual Abuse: This occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs, whatever form this may take. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognize a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behavior e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour

This list is of course not exhaustive

What to do if abuse is suspected

Staff may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. Staff may see it happening, may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed above, it may be reported to staff members by someone else or directly by the young person affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately.

If a student says or indicates that they are being abused, staff should use the following guidelines without delay. YOU MUST ACT ON ANY ALLEGATIONS MADE, YOU CANNOT EVER IGNORE AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION:

DO

- Do stay calm in the event of an allegation. Don't panic, don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the student is in immediate danger.
- Do get the CPO, DCPOs or Director of studies to join in the discussion with you and the student immediately
- Do get a pen and paper. Record in writing as near as verbatim as possible what is said to you. Take all details possible, dates, times, alleged actions, persons involved. Questions to establish facts may be asked (e.g. When did it take place?). LEADING QUESTIONS MAY NOT BE ASKED (e.g. That was done to you, wasn't it?).
- Do complete an incident form (available from the Child Protection Officer) and return this form to the Child protection Officer

- Do Listen, hear and believe. DO NOT INTERPRET OR PUT WORDS INTO THE MOUTH OF SOMEONE MAKING AN ALLEGATION
- Do give time to the person to say what they want
- Do reassure & explain that they have done the right thing in telling. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed
- Only agree to keep a secret on the proviso that IT IS NOT ANYTHING THAT MAY BE HARMFUL TO THE CHILD. Indicate that the choice as to what may be construed as being harmful is solely in the preview of the staff member
- Do explain the next steps
- Do report to the CPO, DCPO and / or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies where appropriate

DON'T

- Don't make assumptions
- Don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations
- Don't promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be OK (it might not be)
- Don't try to deal with it yourself, always report, never investigate
- Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Don't 'gossip' with colleagues about what has been said to you
- Don't make a child repeat a story unnecessarily

Remember **T.E.D. – Tell me, explain to me, describe to me.** Get the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies to sign, date and file your report. **All contact between the child concerned and the alleged abuser should cease with immediate effect. The CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will speak to the person concerned to advise them of the allegations and advise them that no further contact is permitted. The CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies should make a written note of their response to the allegations.** The Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will immediately contact the CPO and/or DCPO should any report be made without the latter's knowledge, who will take appropriate action which may involve contacting external agencies (An TUSLA), contacting agents / parents, suspending the member of staff concerned (or student) pending an investigation

If you suspect a student is being abused by an adult, you should follow this procedure without delay

- If staff members suspect an adult (or another student) is a threat to a child in some way tell the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director who will speak to the individual concerned and inform them of the allegations.
- Concerned staff members and the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies should immediately log and record what has happened, what was seen, what was suspected or what has been told. The CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will sign this report. If the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies feels there are grounds for the staffs' suspicions, then...
- **All contact between the child concerned and the alleged abuser should cease with immediate effect. The CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will speak to the person concerned to advise them of the allegations and advise them that no further contact is permitted. The CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies should make a written note of their response to the allegations**
- The Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will then contact the CPO or DCPO who will take appropriate action which may involve contacting external agencies, contacting agents / parents, suspending the member of staff concerned (or student) pending an investigation

- If the Director of Studies is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the initial report must be made to the CPO, DCPO or Assistant Director of Studies who will refer the allegation to TUSLA and inform other relevant parties.

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).

Process of reporting

Communicate your concerns with your CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies

↓
With your CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies, seek medical attention for the vulnerable person if needed

↓
Interview the student concerned with your CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies and record all details in writing with him or her establishing facts only

↓
The Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will then report the incident to one or both of the Erin School of English Child Protection Officers if that person is unaware of the allegations

↓
The Child Protection Officer will then contact TUSLA

↓

The CPO will ensure that feedback from TUSLA is received and their response recorded

4 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.

What information should staff record in my report

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred (facts only)
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to TUSLA should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact TUSLA directly on 01 7718500 or the ISPCCL Helpline on 1850 50 40 50 or Childline on 01 676 7960.

All reports will be reported to and recorded by one of the Child Protection Officers or the Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies and kept securely in a password protected folder on the internal computer network (N Drive). Only the nominated Child Protection Officers and Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies will have access to this folder as well as outside agencies as appropriate.

5 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

6 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.

7 Professional boundaries

The following are some examples of where professional boundaries may be exceeded

- Personal relationships between a member of staff and a student is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as facebook.
- Use of abusive language is prohibited
- Use of punishment or chastisement is prohibited
- Passing on personal contact details to students is prohibited
- Taking students to a member of staff's home is prohibited
- Selling to or buying items from a student is prohibited
- Accepting responsibility for any valuables on behalf of a student is prohibited
- Accepting money as a gift/ borrowing money from or lending money to a student is prohibited
- Buying items deemed illegal for a minor by state law (Alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs etc) is strictly prohibited.

8 Training

The Child Protection Officers have both received formal training up to level 3. 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.

9 Electronic contact with students under the age of 18

Staff must exercise the same discretion and maintain the same professional distance in any electronic contact with children (anyone under 18) as they would in normal day-to-day life. Electronic contact includes telephone communications (including texting) and online environments. Broadly speaking, never engage in any electronic communication with any students under the age of 18.

Good practice

- Never initiate electronic contact with a child unless for clear pedagogical purposes that have been sanctioned by the Director of Studies or under the auspices of responsible adults of a hosting household for the purposes of the child's welfare.
- If a child contacts you electronically, keep your tone friendly, professional and neutral.
- Avoid situations that involve the exchange of personal information, personal photos, virtual gifts or the use of any application that suggests or encourages the sharing of personal feelings.
- If a child seeks to develop an inappropriate personal relationship with you electronically, do nothing to encourage this; inform the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies and send a copy of any relevant communications. Do not engage in electronic communication with a student.
- If a child confides sensitive information to you electronically, such as details of abuse, react as described in this policy document, 'If a child discloses abuse'. Record the details and send a copy of all relevant communications to the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies.
- Do not initiate or accept 'friendship' requests from children, however innocent these requests may seem, as this provides access to photos and other intimate details of each other's personal lives.
- Do not establish or seek to establish social contact with under 18s/pupils during or after the course.
- Do not give personal email addresses or personal phone numbers to students under 18.
- Do not communicate via email, text, phone, apps or social networking sites, blogs, web pages or instant messaging services with under 18s.
- Do not post photos or videos of students under 18 on any social networking sites.
- Do not distribute (by any means) images or information about students of any age.
- Always avoid becoming personally involved in a student's personal affairs.
- Always be aware that personal web profiles can be viewed by anyone and therefore you should be especially cautious about public web profiles and privacy settings.
- Always seek advice from the CPO, DCPO or Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies if an under 18 seeks to establish social contact with you. **Normally, you should never do this**

Use of photographic/filming equipment

All members of staff should be vigilant and any concerns should 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/Assistant 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.

10 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.

11 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

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 offer afternoon activities 5 times a week (Monday to Friday) and students are supervised on site until 4.30pm during weekdays. Strict registers are kept in the mornings and afternoons and any absences are followed up immediately.
- 7 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
- 8 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
- 9 All members of our staff receive child protection training
- 10 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.
- 11 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

Appendix 1 **Contact Details**

Training, Guidance and support is available from The Child Protection Programme of the National Youth Council of Ireland
Child Protection Programme
NYCI, 3 Montague Street, Dublin 2
01 4784122/01 4255943
childprotection@nyci.ie
www.childprotection.ie

Further Guidance

HSE Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/child_welfare_protection/ChildrenFirst.pdf

HSE Practice Handbook

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/services/Children/WelfarePractice.pdf>

HSE Information and Advice Officers

Jan Perrin; jan.perrinhse.ie

Edwina Flavin; edwinallavin@hse.ie

01 4691 720

TUSLA Child and Family Agency

www.tusla.ie

info@tusla.ie

01 771 8500