



Young Horizons Child Protection Procedures

Relevant Roles in yH

The Provider: Chairperson Steve Kelly

The Designated Liaison Person: CEO Aoibheann Doyle

The Relevant Person: CEO Aoibheann Doyle

The Mandated Person: CEO Aoibheann Doyle

Volunteers in contact with children: Committee Members:

1. Mary Geoghegan
2. Kevin Foy
3. Ronan Mac Donald
4. Sarah Claxton
5. Aidan Power

Code of Behaviour

- All staff/volunteers will show respect and understanding for the children/young people involved;
- Inappropriate behaviour/language will not go unchallenged;
- A list of 'ground rules' will be drawn up for each event, and these will be distributed to all participants and will be signed up to, prior to the event.
- The privacy of the participants will be respected at all times;
- Participants should be encouraged to report to a staff member or teacher any cases of bullying and the teacher in charge must be made aware of this;
- Staff/volunteers should avoid showing favouritism towards any one participant and should ensure that the relationship is constructive and aims to build the independence and autonomy of the participants.
- Staff/volunteers should avoid divulging any personal information to a young person, including but not limited providing them with mobile number, email or any social media profiles. All interaction between students and volunteers will be conducted through yH.
- Staff/volunteers should avoid any one-on-one interactions with the students during any programme or event.
- Staff/volunteers are expected to conduct themselves to the highest standard and act as a role model to all yH participants.



Recruitment & Training of Staff/volunteers

Putting in place good procedures in recruitment and training practice is a central element in ensuring the safety and welfare of all adults and young people involved in the organisation.

Permanent staff of yH

- Recruitment will include 2 interviews, one over the phone and one in person. It will also include the applicant providing the names of two referees who are contacted.
- All adults working with young people directly, who under the Garda Vetting Act will have the possibility of forming a relationship with a person under the age of 18, will be vetted. (See yH Garda Vetting policy for more details)
- Staff/volunteers will be given a copy of the yH Child Protection Policy and Statement and will be asked to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents and that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with children/young people.
- As the organisation grows, a new relevant person and designated liaison person will be appointed. Their recruitment procedures will be the same as above, however, they will be required to have previous work experience with children or young persons in a similar or relevant role. They will also be required to complete Garda vetting and attend a Children First training programme in advance of their appointment.

Staff and volunteers from another organisation

- When working with staff/volunteers from another organisation (i.e. RTE) in facilitating an event involving children/young people, such staff/volunteers will be given the yH Child Protection policy and code of behaviour and will be asked to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents and that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with children/young people;
- All adults working with young people directly, who under the Garda Vetting Act will have the possibility of forming a relationship with a person under the age of 18, will be vetted. (See yH Garda Vetting policy for more details)



Training

All staff of yH will be expected to participate in relevant training from time to time. Those working directly with children/young people must have received some training on the issue of child protection.

Where young people, under 18 years, are assisting in the work of yH, they will receive appropriate information on the yH Child Protection Policy and national child protection policy at a level suitable to their age and experience. These young people will always work in partnership with or under the supervision of an adult.

Induction training for any new staff will include training on the yH child protection policy which is based on the 2017 Children First guidelines.

Managing Risk

As part of the Children First recommended Child Safeguarding statement, yH has conducted a risk assessment in relation to the protection of young people during any yH programme. This risk assessment can be viewed on request, and a synopsis is made available on the yH website.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

yH strives to ensure that the experience of the child/young person in our work is a happy and productive one. In the event of a child/young person disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member/volunteer involved. The following are guidelines to support the worker/volunteer in this:

- React calmly;
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the young person seriously;
- Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- Do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions;
- Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- 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;
- Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures which will follow;



- Pass the information to the Designated Liason Person (DLP) who will then work with the relevant mandated persons to submit a joint report to Tulsa.
- If a decision to not report the disclosure is come to by the DLP and mandated person, the volunteer/staff who passed the information along will receive a written reason as to why. If they do not agree they can speak to the DLP about their concerns and then fill out their own non-mandated report to Tulsa.

Definition and Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Definitions of the four types of abuse, how to recognise abuse and an explanation of “reasonable grounds for concern” are included in the “Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children”.

Responsibility to Report Child Abuse

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

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

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

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

- The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse, should bring it to the attention of the DLP immediately.
- The DLP will assess and review the information that has been provided. The DLP may contact Tulsa for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.
- After consultation with Tulsa officials, the DLP will then take one of two options:



- Report the allegation, concern or disclosure to the Tulsa on behalf of yH or make a joint report with the relevant mandated persons in the students school; or
- Not make a formal report to Tulsa but keep a record of the concerns on file. The reasons for not reporting the allegation, concern or disclosure will be clearly recorded. The employee/volunteer who made the initial report will be informed if a formal report is not being made to the Tulsa and it is open to him/her to make a formal report themselves, directly to the relevant authority if they feel this is necessary.

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

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

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

Confidentiality

In matters of child abuse, an employee/volunteer should never promise to keep secret, any information which is divulged. It should be explained to the young person that this information cannot be kept secret but only those who need to know, will be told.

It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies. The information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and the number of people that need to be informed should be kept to a minimum.

Action to be taken when an allegation is made against a staff member

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee of yH, there are two procedures that the yH will put in place:

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

In the case of the allegation being against an employee of yH, the same person will not deal with both the young person and the alleged abuser. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately. The DLP will follow the normal reporting procedure in yH. It will be the



responsibility of the CEO/Chairperson of yH to deal with a staff member against whom an allegation has been made.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Director General, the Secretary General in the Department of Health and Children will deal with all aspects relating to the Director General.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the DLP, the Chairperson will deal with all aspects of the case, including the reporting procedure.

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

- The Chairperson of yH will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the employee.
- The allegation will be assessed by the DLP to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities, at this point. The DLP may wish to contact Tulsa for advice on the issue.
- The safety of the child is the first priority of yH and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child is safe. The measures taken will be proportionate to the level of risk.
- The yH will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/carers as appropriate.
- The measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following: suspension of duties of the person accused, re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children/young people, working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation or other measures as deemed appropriate.
- If a formal report is being made the employer will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained.
- yH will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.



- yH will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and Tulsa and any decisions on action to be taken in regard to the employee will be taken in consultation with these agencies.
- The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this period and the yH will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.

In the case of an allegation being made against a volunteer within yH the DLP will deal with the issue as outlined in the steps above.

Complaints procedure in relation to child safety and protection

yH is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children/young people with whom we work. yH has put in place a complaints procedure to cover any situations which may arise, when children/young people or their parents/guardians are not happy with the way the children/young people were treated by yH. Complaints should be directed to the DLP or CEO.

Record Keeping

The DLP is responsible for keeping the following records related to Child Protection in a locked filing cabinet. The DLP and the CEO are the only officers who have access to these records:

- Any complaints about the safety and welfare of children/young people while working with the yH;
- Any disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse;
- The follow up to any complaints, disclosure, concerns or allegations, including informal advice from the Tulsa, reports to the Tulsa and informing parents/guardians;
- Any bullying complaints related to yH with children/young people and the follow up action;
- Signed acceptance forms of the yH Child Protection Policy by staff members, people on short term contracts, staff/volunteers from other agencies working on yH projects.
- All Garda Vetting Forms (secure online only accessible to Garda Vetting Liaison);
- All Parental/Guardian Consent Forms.