



Dublin Buddhist Centre

Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy June 24th 2016

Dublin Buddhist Centre (DBC)	Approval date 24.06.2016	Revision Date 24.06.2021
Responsibility for approval of policy	DBC Council	
Responsibility for implementation	Designated Liaison Person	
Responsibility for ensuring review	Designated Liaison Person	

We the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers of the Dublin Buddhist Centre are committed to protecting all children and vulnerable persons served by our activities. We will work to protect these children and vulnerable persons from all physical, sexual, mental/emotional abuse (*see Appendix 1 for Definitions of Abuse*) by providing a safe and nurturing environment within our activities and by acting in conjunction with the appropriate agencies on issues of concern about abuse or disclosure.

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issue of children and vulnerable persons abuse and respond to such abuse.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable persons by:

- Adopting children and vulnerable persons protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers,
- Sharing information about children and vulnerable persons protection and good practice with the public, staff and volunteers,
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, guardians, children and vulnerable persons appropriately,
- Following appropriate procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers (*see Appendix 2 for a general statement regarding recruitment and selection of staff*).
- Providing effective children and vulnerable persons protection management for staff and volunteers, through training and support.

For the purposes of this document a child is defined as someone who is under 18 years of age and availing of services provided by the Dublin Buddhist Centre both on and off Dublin Buddhist Centre premises.

For the purposes of this document a vulnerable person is a person, other than a child, who:

- is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
- has an intellectual disability,
- Is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age or
- Has a physical disability.

Which is of such a nature or degree:

- As to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or
 - That results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.
- and availing of services provided by the Dublin Buddhist Centre both on and off Dublin Buddhist Centre premises.

Designated Member of Staff

The Dublin Buddhist Centre Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection Co-ordinator, as designated person under the national guidelines, is responsible for ensuring that children and vulnerable persons protection procedures and arrangements are in place within the organisation, in consultation with one named member of the Board of Directors who is not staff.

All concerns about physical, sexual, mental or emotional abuse should be reported to the Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Co-ordinator (*see Appendix 3 Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse*). The Chairperson and named member of the Board of Directors should also be informed. Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child or vulnerable person.

Where any allegations may involve the Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Co-ordinator then the named member of the Board of Directors and Chairperson should take responsibility to see that all of the Dublin Buddhist Centre's obligations in the matter are met, and take on, as appropriate, the Co-ordinator's reporting role.

Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Protection Coordinator:

Elena Gamble (Prajnagita) Date: June 24th 2016

Designated Board Member:

John Greaney (Vasubhadra) Date: June 24th 2016

Chairperson:

Ben Brewer (Jnanadhara) Date: June 24th 2016

The Dublin Buddhist Centre's Practices in Relation to Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection within the Organisation

Dublin Buddhist Centre acknowledges that as an organisation working with children and vulnerable persons it has a moral obligation and inherent responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of the children and vulnerable persons with whom it works. Below are the Dublin Buddhist Centre's organisational practices to ensure best practice in relation to children and vulnerable persons protection.

1. Dublin Buddhist Centre as an organisation strives to promote the welfare, health, development and safety of the children and vulnerable persons with whom it works, by ensuring that best practice is adhered to in relation to children and vulnerable persons protection issues.
2. Dublin Buddhist Centre raises awareness within the organisation of issues related to children and vulnerable persons protection by ensuring that staff members, members of the Board of Directors and volunteers are familiar with this document outlining the organisation's principles and practices relating to children and vulnerable persons protection. In addition, staff members and volunteers can seek further advice from the organisation's designated person with overall responsibility for issues relating to children and vulnerable persons protection.
3. The Dublin Buddhist Centre staff, teaching staff and volunteers who work with directly with children and vulnerable persons as a regular and necessary part of their work and who are in a position to build a relationship of trust with children and vulnerable persons must undergo Garda Vetting as per the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

Please refer to the DBC Garda Vetting Policy for relevant procedures.

4. The Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Co-ordinator will be the permanently designated person within the organisation who will liaise with external agencies in the event of a report being made to the HSE or An Garda Síochána concerning a child protection issue. He/she, along with the named member of the Board of Directors, will also act as a resource to staff, members of the Board of Directors and volunteers, and provide specific guidance in relation to the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable persons involved with the organisation. Where allegations in any way concern the Dublin Buddhist Centre Co-ordinator then the named member of the Board of Directors and the Chairperson should step in to ensure Dublin Buddhist Centre's responsibilities are discharged fully.
5. In the event that a children and vulnerable persons protection concern is not reported to an external agency, the staff member, member of the Board of Directors or volunteer who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement outlining the reason why the organisation did not take action. The staff member, member of the Board of Directors or volunteer will be advised that if they remain concerned they can consult with or report to the HSE or An Garda Síochána.

6. The Dublin Buddhist Centre will ensure that there will be two supervising adults present at all times during work with children and vulnerable persons, in line with best practice.

Staff and Volunteer Guidelines

Staff and volunteers should avoid spending time alone with children and vulnerable persons, away from others. Meetings with individual children and vulnerable persons should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other staff or volunteers informed of the meeting.

Staff and volunteers are advised to avoid unnecessary physical contact with children and vulnerable persons. However, there may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child or physical support. In all cases, physical contact should take place only with the consent of the child or vulnerable person.

It is not good practice to take children and vulnerable persons alone in a car on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parents and of someone in a position of responsibility in the organisation in the case of children, and of someone in a position of responsibility in the organisation in the case of vulnerable persons.

Staff and volunteers should not meet with children and vulnerable persons outside organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of parents and a person in a position of responsibility in the organisation in the case of children, and of someone in a position of responsibility in the organisation in the case of vulnerable persons.

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horse-play with children and vulnerable persons;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, in front of, or to children or vulnerable persons, even in fun; or allow children to use inappropriate sexual language unchallenged;
- Physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child or vulnerable persons;
- Take pictures of children or vulnerable persons unless you have prior school, carer or parental consent to do so.
- Perform tasks of a personal nature for children and vulnerable persons that they can perform for themselves (Staff members and volunteers are not responsible for the personal hygiene needs of children and vulnerable adults.).
- Let allegations a child or vulnerable person makes go without being addressed or recorded.

Reporting Procedure for the Dublin Buddhist Centre Staff of Child Protection Concerns

The Dublin Buddhist Centre's organisational procedure with regard to the reporting of suspected child abuse is:

1. The safety and well-being of the child in question is the priority and information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis only in order to safeguard the child (see *Appendix 4 Confidentiality Statement*).
2. The designated person will be contacted and informed of the concern, if the designated person is not contactable, then the designated board member should be contacted. Failing that, contact should be made directly with the HSE or An Garda Síochána (see *Appendix 5 for relevant contact numbers*).
3. If there are reasonable grounds for concern and staff require further advice, the designated staff member will contact a HSE social worker or public health nurse to discuss their concerns, with the aim of deciding whether or not to report their concerns formally.
4. If it is decided to make a report, the report will be made to the HSE. If the child or vulnerable person appears to be in immediate and serious danger, and a social worker attached to the HSE is unavailable, then An Garda Síochána will be contacted.
5. Neither the child in question, nor their parents, will be interviewed in detail by staff members about the suspected abuse – this is the role of the HSE or An Garda Síochána.
6. If the Dublin Buddhist Centre submits a report to the HSE or An Garda Síochána the parents/carers will be informed unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.
7. If the child in question is in an immediately dangerous situation they will not under any circumstances be left in that situation whilst waiting on HSE intervention.

Reporting Format for the Dublin Buddhist Centre Staff of Child Protection Concerns

Please refer to the Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns (*Appendix 6*).

Reporting Procedure for the Dublin Buddhist Centre Staff of Vulnerable Persons Protection Concerns:

The Dublin Buddhist Centre's organisational procedure with regard to the reporting of suspected vulnerable persons abuse is:

1. The safety and well-being of the vulnerable person in question is the priority and information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis only in order to safeguard the vulnerable person (see *Appendix 4 Confidentiality Statement*).
2. If you are concerned about the protection or welfare of a vulnerable person, contact the Designated Liaison Person.
3. When the Designated Liaison Person receives a report about suspected or actual abuse, s/he will consider the wishes of the vulnerable person and if there are reasonable grounds for reporting to the statutory authorities – any HSE staff member and/or An Garda Síochána. This will mean:
 - Clarifying or getting more information about the matter

- Consulting with the vulnerable person to her/his wishes, etc.
 - Where there is any doubt or uncertainty, consulting the statutory authorities to obtain their advice about the situation
 - Where there are concerns about the diminished capacity of the vulnerable person, considering assessment of decision-making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person
 - Making a formal referral to the statutory authorities
4. A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. These suspicions, however, will be recorded or noted internally by the Designated Liaison Person as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for the statutory authorities.
 5. A full written record of all decisions will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person.
 6. In an emergency, where a person is at immediate risk, you should contact An Garda Síochana.
 7. All information concerned with the identification and reporting of vulnerable persons abuse is subject to best practice guidance on confidentiality (*see Appendix 4 Confidentiality Statement*). Where a vulnerable person has capacity, their consent should be sought prior to disclosing information to other parties or the statutory authorities.
 8. The consent of the vulnerable person should be sought prior to reporting any matter to the statutory authorities and on to family and care service providers. Sometimes adults do not want civil authorities to take action to investigate or protect them from harm. If upon receipt of the concern, where the vulnerable persons does not give consent to reporting, and it is not clear that a criminal act has taken place, and where the Designated Liaison Person believes that others may also be at risk of harm, consultation should take place with civil authorities as to the best course of action in the absence of consent.

In considering the capacity of the vulnerable person to give consent, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The person has capacity to understand what is being asked of him or her.
- Sufficient information is given, in a way that the person understands, to enable him/her to make an informed decision
- Consent is not received through any form of coercion

If the vulnerable person is unable to give informed consent, discussions will take place with their carer/guardian/close family member about reporting concerns/allegations and, where appropriate, discussions should also take place with any medical or social work personnel. There may need to be a determination as to who can give consent on behalf of the vulnerable person. In some cases there may already be provision in place; consultation may be required with legal advisers and statutory authorities. The

Designated Liaison Person will not make determinations around capacity to give consent without consultation with appropriately training and skilled personnel.

Allegations of Abuse against a Dublin Buddhist Centre Employee or Volunteer

In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a Dublin Buddhist Centre employee or volunteer the following procedures will be followed.

1. Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis only in order to safeguard the child and vulnerable person (*see Appendix 4 Confidentiality Statement*).
2. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors will be informed.
3. The allegation will be assessed and a decision will be made based on reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above.
4. The employee/volunteer will be advised of the allegation and the nature of the allegation.
5. The employee/volunteer will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation. The response should be documented and this will be included in any formal report to the HSE or An Garda Síochána.
6. The employee/volunteer will not be permitted to work with children and vulnerable persons until the resolution of the allegation.
7. A report will be submitted to the HSE or An Garda Síochána as appropriate
8. Dublin Buddhist Centre staff members will work in co-operation with the HSE or An Garda Síochána with regard to the allegation.

Appendix 1 – Definitions of Abuse:

Below are the main categories of abuse relevant to children and vulnerable adults (see *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and the HSE’s ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse’*).

1. Neglect

“Neglect can be defined as being where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care....The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.”
(*Children First* p.31)

2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse usually happens where there is a relationship between a carer and a child rather than as a specific incident or incidents. *“Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.”* (*Children First* p.31). Rather, it can manifest in the child’s behaviour or physical functioning. Examples of these include ‘anxious’ attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement and uncooperative or hostile behaviour.

Examples of emotional abuse in children might include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carer;
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way;
- Under or over-protection of the child;
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline;
- Exposure to domestic violence.

3. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from willful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Examples of physical injury include the following:

- Shaking;
- Use of excessive force in handling;
- Deliberate poisoning;
- Suffocation;
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child.

4. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves the use of a child for gratification or sexual arousal by a person for themselves or others.

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- Sexual intercourse with a child whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- Sexual exploitation of a child... may also include showing sexually explicit material to Children and vulnerable persons protection which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse;
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person.

In addition the following types of abuse are also to be considered as relevant to vulnerable persons:

Financial or material abuse:

Including misusing or stealing the person's property, possessions or benefits, cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on them about will's property, inheritance or financial transactions.

Discriminatory abuse:

Including - the abuse of a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.

Institutional abuse:

This can happen when an organisation where the person is living or receiving care from fails to ensure that the necessary processes and systems are in place to safeguard vulnerable persons and maintain good standards of care and service. Including - lack of training of staff and volunteers, lack of or poor quality supervision and management, poor record keeping and liaison with other agencies, low staff morale and high staff turnover.

Appendix 2: General statement regarding recruitment and selection of staff

The recruitment and selection of staff is managed by the board of the Dublin Buddhist Centre. The recruitment and selection of volunteers is managed by the Dublin Buddhist Centre staff (Centre Team). Staff and volunteers are selected and recruited from within the Triratna Buddhist Community and recruitment is based on the suitability of the position/role at hand.

All staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable persons will be required to read the Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy and sign the '**Acceptance of the Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy for staff and volunteers working with Children and Vulnerable Persons (Appendix 7)**' verifying that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable persons. They also agree to be Garda Vetted, as necessary.

Also, where necessary, references will be sought for staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable persons.

Appendix 3: Protection For Persons Reporting Child Abuse:

Every organisation that provides services to children should have somebody who is responsible for dealing with suspected or actual abuse, i.e. the Designated Person(s).

Under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, you cannot be held liable for damages for reporting suspected child abuse to the Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochana as long as your report has been made reasonably and in good faith.

Employees/Volunteers cannot be penalised for forming an opinion of this nature and communicating it to an appropriate person if they have acted reasonably and in good faith forming that opinion and making the communication.

It is an offence under the Act to knowingly make a false statement of this nature.

Appendix 4 - Confidentiality Statement

The Dublin Buddhist Centre is committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to children and vulnerable persons welfare the Dublin Buddhist Centre undertakes that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the children and vulnerable person;
- The Dublin Buddhist Centre cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or vulnerable person are at risk. This will include giving information to An Garda Síochána or HSE where necessary.

Primary carers, children and vulnerable persons involved have a right to know if personal information about them is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána, unless doing so could put the child or vulnerable person at further risk.

Appendix 5 – Relevant Contact Numbers HSE and An Garda Síochána.

Tusla - Child and Family Agency

Dublin North City
Ballymun Healthcare Facility
Ballymun Civic Centre
Dublin 9

Telephone: 01 846 7129

The Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, operates an out-of hours Crisis Intervention Service in the Dublin area, which can be accessed by emergency services like hospitals and the Garda Síochána outside of office hours.

The Tusla Duty Social Work Team for the North Inner City area can be contacted on 01 856 6856, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

HSE Information Line

Telephone: 1850 24 1850
Website: www.hse.ie

Outside office hours all child and vulnerable adult protection concerns should be referred to the Gardaí. The Garda station closest to The Dublin Buddhist Centre is:

Store Street Garda Station
4-6 Store Street
Dublin 1
D01 W773.

Telephone: 01 666 8000 or call 999/112 if an immediate response is required

Publications:

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

Published by the Department of Health and Children. Available online at <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>

Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures.

Published by the HSE Social Care Division. Available online at <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/personsatriskofabuse.pdf>

Appendix 6 – Example Standard Report Form for the reporting of child abuse

FORM NUMBER: CC01:01:00

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W Concerns to HSE)



6. Relationships

Details of Mother		Details of Father	
Name:		Name:	
Address: (if different to child)		Address: (if different to child)	
Telephone Nos.		Telephone Nos.	

7. Household composition

Name	Relationship	DOB	Additional information, e.g. school/occupation/other

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

	Name	Address
Social Worker		
PHN		
GP		
Hospital		
School		
Gardaí		
Pre-School/Crèche/YG		
Other (<i>specify</i>):		

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

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

10. Details of person completing form

Name:		Occupation:	
Signed		Date:	

Guidance Notes for Standard Report Form

The HSE has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991 to promote the welfare and protection of children. The HSE therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This Report Form is for use by:

- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children, including HSE personnel, who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the HSE.
- Designated persons in a voluntary or community agency.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child or the support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate this by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

The HSE aims to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence, you should note that the HSE cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality for the following reasons:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report', you are protected under the Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the HSE duty social worker and discuss your concerns with them.

The form can be downloaded from the HSE website here:

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/ChildrenandFamilyServices/childrenfirst/>

Appendix 7 - Acceptance of the Dublin Buddhist Centre Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy for staff and volunteers working with Children and Vulnerable Persons

I have read the Dublin Buddhist Centre's Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy and agree to abide by its contents. There is no reason why I would be considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable persons. I also give my permission for the Dublin Buddhist Centre to undertake to complete Garda Vetting as necessary.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____