



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Child Safeguarding Policy created by Child Protection Solutions on behalf of Athy Sing and Sign



Child Protection Solutions

Tel: (086) 352 8958/(059) 86 32758
Web: info@childprotectionsol.com
www.childprotectionsol.com
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1. PREAMBLE

ATHY SING AND SIGN is committed to promoting a supportive and positive learning environment in which all individual members have the opportunity to develop their Irish Sign Language (ISL) skills, to learn about Deaf Culture and the Deaf Community. The welfare of the child/Young person is paramount and we do this by fostering an ethos of inclusion and equality for all children and young people: ensuring that all activities are managed in a safe manner: setting out a code of behaviour for volunteers and young people with regard to how they should behave, around each other.

ATHY SING AND SIGN adheres to the procedures laid down in the Children's First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, as published by the Department.

Volunteers will attend relevant Child Protection Training and will confirm that they have read, understand and will follow the policy and procedure in this document and abide by the Code of Behaviour of the ATHY SING AND SIGN.

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2. DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON/CHILD WELFARE OFFICER

MS LINDA DOBBYN

Scottrath, Old Dublin Road, Athy, Co.Kildare

Phone: 086 810 0047

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

ATHY SING AND SIGN aims to respond to all complaints in a timely and appropriate manner.

The following procedures are to be followed with regard to complaints, verbal and written:

- All complaints are to be logged.
- When logging a complaint it is important that the following information is included: name of person making the complaint, name of person to whom the complaint was made, date and time, nature of the complaint.
- The Designated Liaison Person will then direct it to the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint.
- All complaints to be responded to as soon as possible by the Designated Liaison Person,
- With regard to a serious allegation the Designated Liaison Person asks that the person against whom an allegation has been made stand down pending an investigation
- The person who made the complaint is to be kept informed as to progress and outcome.

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3. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Confidentiality Statement

ATHY SING AND SIGN respect the privacy of all persons involved in its services by ensuring confidentiality in relation to child protection concerns. Volunteers need to be clear that no undertaking of secrecy can be given to any person (child or adult) disclosing alleged abuse of a child or young person (*Children First 2.3*) or where there is a child welfare concern, and that the the sharing of information with those who have a 'need to know' in order to safeguard a child is not a breach of confidentiality.

3.2 Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers will undergo a selection process which involves Garda Vetting. Garda Vetting is carried out by GNIB on behalf of ATHY SING AND SIGN.

Volunteers are obliged to sign a copy of this statement to confirm that they have read and understood ATHY SING AND SIGN's Child Safeguarding policies and the procedures within.

Appropriate training in Child Protection and Welfare will be offered and volunteers expected to attend.

3.3 Code of Behaviour

ATHY SING AND SIGN adheres to the Code of Behaviour as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Guidelines as prescribed by the *Children First National Guidelines*.

This Code of Behaviour makes clear what is expected from volunteers and members as Good Practice. This aims to:

- Protect Children and Young People.
- Protect Volunteers against false allegations.
- Clarify for volunteers and members how they are expected to behave around one another and in cases of doubt what is not acceptable behaviour.

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3.4 Social Media Policy

ATHY SING AND SIGN use WhatsApp videos for the purposes of learning and practicing ISL signs. These videos should only be accessible by volunteers, members and parents/guardians.

The caricatures of members are used by ATHY SING AND SIGN for the purposes of educational publications.

ATHY SING AND SIGN also utilises a Facebook page for public communication and sharing regarding events and achievements.

ATHY SING AND SIGN require that photos and videos of members are not authorised to be shared with outside parties.

Where applicable parents/guardians should sign a consent form to indicate their permission for photos/likenesses of their child to be utilised on social or mainstream media.

3.5 Anti-Bullying Policy

ATHY SING AND SIGN work to maintain an environment where bullying behaviours amongs children and young people are identified and actively challenged.

All incidents of bullying will be investigated and actions taken to address them.

3.6 Anti-Discrimination Policy

ATHY SING AND SIGN undertakes to ensure that all members and volunteers are not discriminated against on the basis of their gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious or cultural beliefs, intellectual, sensory or physical abilities.

All incidences of discrimination will be investigated and appropriate actions taken to address them.

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3.7 Accidents Procedure

All accidents will be logged in an incident book and parents/guardians will be notified of any injury to their child. In the case of where volunteers are trained in First Aid minor injuries will be treated on site.

Medical Assistance will be sought for more serious injuries, if possible from the child's own GP.

In the case of an emergency the child will be brought to the nearest doctor or A&E Department.

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4 REPORTING TO HSE/TUSLA OR AN GARDA SIOCHANA

ATHY SING AND SIGN acknowledges that the statutory Responsibility for the investigation and assessment of allegations or suspicions of child abuse rests with the HSE/Tusla and An Garda Siochana. The role of the Designated Liaison Person/Child Welfare Office in ATHY SING AND SIGN is to report any suspicion of Child Protection/Welfare concerns.

Volunteers who report child abuse or suspicions of child abuse to the Designated Liaison Person/Child Welfare Officer are protected by the provisions of the '*Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act (1998)*).

The Legislation provides that a person reporting receives immunity from civil liability when the report is made "*reasonably and in good faith*" to a Designated Person, the HSE or any member of An Garda Siochana,

The guiding principles for reporting child abuse and welfare concerns are summarised as firstlt that the safety and well being of the child must take priority and secondly that reports should be made without delay.

If a volunteers witnesses or suspects that a child is being abused or that there is a serious welfare concern, they must report this immediately to the Designated Person who will then make contact with the duty Social Worker without delay.

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5 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Child Protection practices are guided by the '*Children First*' National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

While the *Children First* Document provides comprehensive Guidelines for the Recognition of Child Abuse, summarised definitions are offered here for ease of access.

5.1 Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission where a 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.

Neglect generally becomes apparent over a period of time rather than one specific point.

5.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a caregiver and child. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unlike other forms of abuse it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs and symptoms.

5.3 Physical Abuse

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

5.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her sexual gratification, sexual arousal or for that of others.

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