

**Barnstorm Theatre Company Limited**

# Child Protection Policy

## Child Protection Policy Statement

**Barnstorm Theatre Company Limited** is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where respect for, and the welfare of, the child/young person are paramount. We will adhere to the "*Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*" by having and implementing procedures covering:

- Safe recruitment, training, and management/supervision of staff
- Code of behaviour for staff
- Incidents and accidents
- Complaints
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Confidentiality
- Access, upon request, to information on these procedures to relevant parties
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff

Where we work with children through a host organisation that has the primary contact and relationship with parents/carers, our Child Protection Policy and processes may be mediated through that host organisation.

We may on occasion take photographs and/or video for publicity of Barnstorm's outreach programmes and/or for record keeping purposes. If any parent, carer, teacher, leader, or participant is uncomfortable with photos and/or video being taken during the workshop or requires more information about this or any aspect of our Child Protection Policy Statement, please speak with the Outreach Officer, Anna Galligan (086) 8717875 or outreach@barnstorm.ie).

The detailed policy is available for inspection at Barnstorm's offices. This policy will be reviewed on 14/06/2012.

**Designated Person** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vincent Dempsey**

**(General Manager)**

056-7751266 / 087-2746036

e-mail: [vincent@barnstorm.ie](mailto:vincent@barnstorm.ie)

## **Additional Information for Parents, Carers, Teachers, and Leaders**

*As we are a child centred organisation, we are committed to respecting the child/young person and to putting their interests first.*

*To that end, we will:*

- *Operate child centred policies in accordance with best practice*
- *Listen to, respect, and treat all children and young people equally and as individuals*
- *Lead by example, providing a positive atmosphere of trust in which to have fun and learn through age-appropriate activities*
- *Encourage feedback from children/young people on any aspect of the activities or workshops, including the reporting of any bullying, concerns, or worries*

*It is our policy:*

- *That all workshops conducted by Barnstorm and involving children or young people will have at least two responsible adults present that are facilitators, leaders, teachers, or adult volunteers.*
- *To have at least one facilitator, leader, teacher, or volunteer present in our workshops be aware of and responsible for emergency procedures in respect of fire, accident, or illness, and to comply with all relevant health & safety practices*
- *To require that each organisation with whom we work have Public Liability Insurance for any space in which we deliver a workshop.*

*If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:*

- *Respond to the needs of the child or young person*
- *Follow internal reporting procedures, which include informing the parents/carers of such concerns, unless doing so puts the child or young person at further risk. Any serious concerns would be reported to a social worker or to the gardai in an emergency.*
- *In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform parents/carers where appropriate*

*Please be aware that the nature of the work that we do involves physical contact amongst participants such as might occur, for example, during a game of tag. Participants are welcome to sit out of any activity in which they may feel uncomfortable.*

# Code of behaviour for staff

## 1: Child centred approach

- Treat all children and young people equally;
- Listen to and respect children and young people;
- Involve children/young people in decision making as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all children and young people as individuals;
- Respect a child's/young person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children/young people and their primary carers;
- Agree group contract before beginning session, where appropriate;
- Encourage feedback from group;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child/young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities e.g. school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations due to medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation

## 2: Good Practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of Child Protection Policy and Procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to designated person and follow reporting procedures;
- Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns and worries and be aware of anti-bullying policy;
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision including adequate ratios depending on age, abilities and activities involved and appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations. Have guidelines and a prompt sheet for artist;
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e. don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers;
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and in the event that you do then make sure that the primary carers are informed;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

### 3: Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people;
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language;<sup>1</sup>
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favoritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus of attention;
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g. outside of structured organisational activities.

### 4: Physical Contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

### 5: Health and Safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly.

---

<sup>1</sup> however, work emanating from the artistic process and work of artistic content will not be censored in this way

## Reporting Procedures

Vincent Dempsey has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety or welfare. It is his responsibility to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the designated person to liaise with the HSE or Gardaí where appropriate.

Vincent Dempsey can be contacted at: Barnstorm Theatre Company  
Church Lane  
Kilkenny  
056-7751266  
087-2746036  
[vincent@barnstorm.ie](mailto:vincent@barnstorm.ie)

Anna Galligan has been designated as deputy to Vincent Dempsey and can be contacted at:  
Barnstorm Theatre Company  
Church Lane  
Kilkenny  
056-7751266  
086-8717875  
[outreach@barnstorm.ie](mailto:outreach@barnstorm.ie)

### Reasonable grounds for concern

- specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused
- an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused
- evidence, *such as an injury or behaviour*, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

## **Dealing with a disclosure**

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow them enough time to say what he/she needs to say
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age appropriate)

## **Direction to staff on reporting procedures**

- Record the concern, including the date, time of and people involved in the concern/disclosure and the facts in the incident book. Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions recorded should be supported by facts.
- Inform the designated person or if unavailable their deputy
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern/consult with parents/carers where necessary. Parents/carers should be told of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the duty social worker in your Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form (available from the Health Service Executive). Reports to the duty social worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports will be made to the Health Service Executive without delay.
- If the designated person/deputy is not available then contact the local Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly
- In emergencies which are out of Health Service Executive Social Work hours then contact the Gardaí. There may be extreme situations which threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person where it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.

**See HSE Standard reporting form Appendix 1**

**Where Appropriate Contact:**

Report

South-Eastern Health Board  
11 Patrick Street  
Kilkenny  
056-7784781/2

Advice

Anne Purcell  
Health Centre  
HSE, S.E.A.  
Castlehill  
Carlow  
059-9133797

Emergency

Sergant John O'Hanolan  
Kilkenny Gardai  
Dominic Street  
Kilkenny  
056-7775000

## **Confidentially**

An incident book will be maintained and held at the office of the General Manager under the control and supervision of the designated person. Staff working with children or young people should record suspicions, concerns, worrying observations, behavioural changes, actions and outcomes. The information contained in such records will be treated subject to the terms of the following confidentiality policy.

## **Confidentially Statement**

We in Barnstorm Theatre Company are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be passed on, on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;
- Parents/carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances);
- Procedures will be put in place around the use of images of children/young people;
- Procedures will be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

## **Recruiting and Selecting Staff.**

### **Recruitment Policy Statement.**

We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe artistic environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary);
- Posts will be advertised widely;
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form;
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form;
- At least two written references which are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary;
- Staff and volunteers will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives;
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
- Some of the exclusions would include:
  - any child related convictions;
  - refusal to sign application form and declaration form;
  - insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
  - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- There will be a three-month probationary period;
- All staff and volunteers will be required to consent to Garda clearance/vetting, where available, this will be sought.

## **Managing and Supervising Staff**

### Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff/volunteers and children/young people we undertake that:

#### **New staff will:**

- Take part in an induction training session where appropriate;
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
- Undergo a probation or trial period.

#### **All staff will:**

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of work their practices;
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
- Be provided with child protection training, where appropriate.

## **Involvement of Primary Carers**

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Make primary carers aware of our child protection policy;
- Inform parents/carers and schools of all activities and potential activities;
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant;
- Comply with health and safety practices;
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines;

- Ensure as far as possible, that the activities are age appropriate;
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate;

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person;
- Inform the primary carers on an ongoing basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk;
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive/Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
- Have a designated contact person who is available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child's or young person's welfare.
- Staff members should take cognisance of responsibility for first aid on away trips.

## **Dealing with allegation against staff.**

**Two separate procedures will be followed:**

- A) Vincent Dempsey (designated person) will deal with issues relating to the child/young person;
- B) Philip Hardy (CEO) will deal with issues relating to the staff member against whom the allegation has been made.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
- If allegations are made against the Designated Person then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted;
- The reporting procedures, as outlined above, should be followed. Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age appropriate manner;
- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible
  1. Of the nature of the allegation;
  2. The staff member should be given the opportunity to respond.
- The Chairperson/Head of the Organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí;
- After consultation, chairperson/head of organisation will advise person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

## **Agreed Procedures**

It is the practice of Barnstorm that leaders/facilitators do not generally take workshops with children or young people on their own. In the event of an allegation made against a leader/ facilitator/ staff member, the person accused will not be allowed to work unsupervised with children/young people in any context while the allegation is being investigated. If an allegation of abuse is substantiated against the accused person this will be considered grounds for dismissal as per contract of employment. If a serious allegation can not be

substantiated but cannot either be refuted the person accused will remain working but always under supervision.

## **Complaints and comments procedure**

In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints/comments will responded to within three weeks;
- Vincent Dempsey has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

## **Accident Procedures**

- Barnstorm staff must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation, and should obtain such details in relation to any residential or extended series of events;
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
- External organisations with whom we are dealing must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;
- First aid boxes are available, and regularly restocked;
- First aid boxes are located in the administration office and, when appropriate, in the workshop space;
- Accident/incident books are stored in the office of the General Manager;
- Details of risk assessment in relation to equipment and fittings are available in the Barnstorm Safety Statement, which should be brought to the attention of all.

Appendix 1



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

***STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS***

In case of Emergency or outside Health Board office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

**A. To Principal Social Worker :**

\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Details of Child:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

:

**Female:**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Age/D.O.B.:**

**School:**

**1a. Name of Mother:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Mother if different to Child:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Father:**

**Address of Father if  
different to Child:**

**Telephone Number:**

**1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1c. Household Composition:

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known).

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age:  Male:

Female:

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child:

\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation:

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Social Workers: \_\_\_\_\_

School:

\_\_\_\_\_

Public Health Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Gardai:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

G.P.: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Crèche/Youth Club \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pre-

Other, Specify e.g.  
Youth Groups, After  
School Clubs:

\_\_\_\_\_

5a. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Yes  No

5b. Are the Parents/Legal Guardians supportive Yes  No

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re. Limitations of confidentiality)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidance Notes:

Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

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

Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- 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 Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

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

## Appendix 2

The following provisions supplement Barnstorm's Child Protection Policy and are specific to Kilkenny Youth Theatre (KYT) groups:

### KYT Welfare provisions

- All leaders shall be presented with their own copy of 'Rights and Responsibilities' which is found in Appendix 3, page 97 of the NAYD manual.
- The rights and responsibilities of Youth Theatre members (based on Appendix 3, pages 98-99 of the Irish Youth Theatre Manual) shall be created in a workshop within 5 weeks of the YT year, to ensure all members are aware of them. Copies will be provided to members.
- A charter for Youth Theatre Members (based on Appendix 3, page 99 of the Irish Youth Theatre Manual) shall be created in a workshop within first 5 weeks of the YT year and displayed at all KYT weekly workshops.
- The welfare committee will meet YT members within the first 5 weeks of the YT year, as part of a welfare session, which may include the previous two provisions.