**Branch Safeguarding Statement Template 2020-2021**

**Éire**

**Craobh:** *Naomh Mhichíl* **Contae:** *Luimnigh*

**Note:** This is a sample template provided as a guide only to Comhaltas units and Centres. Please see

the following documents for more information about developing a CCÉ Unit/Centre Child

Safeguarding Statement:

• *Comhaltas Child Protection Policy; Guidelines & Procedures in respect of Branch*

*Involvement with Children/young persons and Vulnerable Adults issued as a guide to*

*units/centres. This policy as stands, or as adapted appropriately by the unit/centre considering*

*local provisions, is recorded as being adopted by each unit/centre on an annual basis.*

• *Comhaltas Child Protection Training Content and Guidelines; Training facilitated and provided*

*by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh (National Liaison for Comhaltas in relation to Child Protection*

*and Garda Vetting).*

• *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*

• *Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement* (www.tusla.ie)

• *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie))

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann – Branch : *Naomh Mhichíl*

**2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm** (*brief outline of what our service is, what we do and our commitment to safeguard children*):

Comhaltas is a voluntary based organisation. Its aims and objectives and are stated in its

Bunreacht. The organisation is understood to be a key contributor to the informal music

education sector, organising community based classes in traditional Irish music, song, dance,

and other cultural activity. It also organises various public events and activities that promote

cultural activity amongst children and adults.

**Sample Principles to safeguard children from harm.**

Regular review and appropriate updating of the COMHALTAS Child Protection Policy taking local provision into consideration.

Our branch has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for matters in relation to Child

Protection and Guidelines and Procedures in respect of Branch Involvement with

Children/Young persons and Vulnerable Adults.

All Comhaltas personnel with regular access to children and/or vulnerable adults are required by the organisation to apply for Garda Vetting (Form NVB1) facilitated by Comhaltas

All such personnel are asked to submit their notice of confirmed Vetting – DISCLOSURE

document and CCÉ Certificate - to any unit of Comhaltas for which they operate any activity

that involves regular access to children/ vulnerable adults.

In circumstances where the regular adult – e.g. volunteer teacher/tutor/ organiser/ activity

leader is not available at short notice, the unit will ensure that any replacement adult working with the children is in the company of a Comhaltas vetted adult.

Minors between the ages of 16 and 18 can apply for Garda vetting with consent (Form NVB3), from their parent/guardian. Comhaltas recommends that minors who work with

children/vulnerable adults should be mentored by experienced and vetted adults to ensure

that young leaders develop interpersonal skills that reflect best practice.

Parents and guardians of children attending classes and activities are at all times notified of

appropriate schedules, locations etc of activities.

Parents and guardians are informed of the local Comhaltas unit’s policy and practices relating to activities organised for children and pupils – e.g. if regular attendance at a class is necessary to ensure consideration for a branch activity.

Comhaltas officers/mentors are volunteers who need to use the most efficient means of communicating details of activities relevant to their pupils, young members and participants.

Parents/guardians are asked to provide their mobile numbers/email addresses in this regard.

Comhaltas adults do not knowingly communicate with a pupil/minor using any means of

digital or other communication including social media.

Any photographs or audio/visual recordings of any minor taken by a Comhaltas

officer/member are taken in the presence of the parent/guardian and with the consent of the parent/guardian. It should be noted that recordings of artists, whatever age, are very much part of the intergenerational transmission of Irish traditional music.

As applies in any activity involving young persons, it is regarded as part of the

parents’/guardians’ duty to ensure that the child is accompanied safely to the appointed

location where the activity is taking place and given into to the temporary care of the

designated adult.

In many Comhaltas settings children/minors participate in a number of classes/activities

which do not run consecutively. Some units are in a position to provide a waiting area with

designated supervisors. Supervision arrangements in such cases will be communicated to

parents/guardians. The class register/attendance sheet is an important element of Child

Protection Policy implementation.

Branch teachers and mentors are fully aware of their role and responsibilities in respect of

appropriate supervision of children while in their care and the general supervision practices

of the branch.

Parents/guardians are informed of the Branch Policy in terms of the use of mobile

phones/digital recording devices. In addition parents/guardians should be aware that any

use of social media by their child, including sharing of digital files, is not the responsibility of

the Comhaltas unit.

From a Health & Safety and Child Safeguarding perspective, the unit has given careful

consideration to the lay-out of the building(s) it uses, and the facilities within that are

accessed by children and adults, during any planned Comhaltas activity.

Comhaltas activities are understood to be group activities. If a branch finds itself with a 1:1

adult-child tuition/activity situation, the door of the room must remain open and the adult

must give prior notification that a 1:1 situation has arisen.

Comhaltas mentors, teachers and relevant personnel are recommended to complete the

online TUSLA Access to Children First E-Learning Programme.

All Comhaltas units are requested to ensure that Child Protection and Safeguarding are an item on the agenda of each meeting of the unit, to ensure continued awareness and to allow for continued updating and review. This inclusion of the topic on the minutes allows for local review on local provision.

**3. Risk Assessment**

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our

services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

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|  | Risk Identified | Procedure to manage identified risk |
| 1 | Challenges/specific issuesrelating to the building(s)/facilities used for Comhaltasclasses / events to ensureadequate safety andsafeguarding of children andvulnerable adult | Use a Branch Class/Activity Memo for supervisors, teachers, mentors, &designated adults, which detailssupervision, appropriate access and exit, class register etc. and is communicated to adults/parents.Ensure that there are no hazards in the facilities being used and ensure that all fire escape routes are free ofobstructions. |
| 2 | A ‘substitute’ teacher/mentorwho needs to be engaged dueto need but who does nothave Comhaltas vetting. | The Branch has a policy in relation to same – If such a teacher/mentor is considered to teach a class / coordinatea branch activity on a once-off basis, aComhaltas Garda-vetted adult remains in the classroom area at all times. |
| 3 | Clarifying responsibility interms of the care of branchjunior members at Comhaltasand non Comhaltas public andparticipative events | Ensuring that parents/guardians, relevant adult are aware of the remit of the branch/teachers/mentors inrelation to the branch participation in public events and of parental/guardian duties in terms of accompanying their children and/or making provisionsfor the adequate care and supervision of their child/minor. |
| 4 | Inappropriate use ofelectronic devices includingmobile phones/ smartphones/iPads by pupils duringComhaltas activities | Unit has a policy/guideline document in place in relation to the use of electronic devices during Comhaltas classes/activities. Parents/guardians areinformed of this policy. |
| 5 | Use of images in Comhaltaspublicity material | Branches of Comhaltas have a policy of requesting appropriate consent regarding the use of images of minors/vulnerable adults used in promotional/publicitymaterial/communications. |

**4. Procedures**

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with the following policies and

procedures:

(1) Comhaltas Child Protection Policy and Guidelines & Procedures in respect of branch

involvement with children/young persons and vulnerable adults

(2) Appointing a Branch DLP

(3) Mandatory Garda Vetting for all Comhaltas personnel with regular access to children and

vulnerable adults.

(4) Carrying out a risk assessment based on the local provisions and setting.

(5) Completing the Branch Child Safeguarding Statement which is considered and adopted

by the branch committee.

Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla is outlined by

the Comhaltas Child Protection Policy and during training seminars facilitated by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, Comhaltas National Child Protection Liaison.

The statutory requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National*

*Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), and Tusla’s *Child Safeguarding:*

*A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*, are core documents which inform the above and are available on Tusla’s website.

Attendance at the training seminars presented by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, National

Comhaltas Child Protection Liaison also provides ongoing guidance to Comhaltas units and

personnel.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

**5. Implementation**

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the

implementation of this Branch Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Branch Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or as soon

as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:\_*Mary Herlihy* Branch: Craobh Naomh Mhichíl

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