



## Child Safeguarding Statement

### Name of service:

Wild Words Children's Book Festival, c/o The Reading Room, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

### Nature of service provided:

The Wild Words Children's Book Festival is festival specifically for teenagers to enjoy books, to meet authors, and to encourage an interest in creative writing. While the festival also hosts events for young people aged 0 to 14 years in partnership with children and young people's groups in different locations around Leitrim, the festival's centerpiece programme at the end of June is for teenagers who have started to write their own short stories and poetry. The festival is managed by a voluntary committee and it is made possible through the support of Leitrim County Council Arts Office, The Reading Room, The Dock, Leitrim Library Service and the Irish Writers Centre.

The experience of attendees is not just about workshops and events they engage in, it is also about how they are treated, cared for and respected by all members of the Wild Words staff they come in contact with. These underlying principals operate throughout the team when dealing with any member of the public on behalf of Wild Words. Wild Words 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 the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Below are Wild Words' principles and procedures which should be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while availing of our services.

- All Wild Words festival staff, contractors and volunteers are required to consent to Garda clearance and are required to have completed, at a minimum, Tusla's on-line child protection training course.
- All staff, contractors and volunteers and are made aware of the festival's child protection procedures and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern.
- All staff will receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices.
- Children are always accompanied by two Wild Words team members at all events, and parent/guardians must provide their contact details and any relevant information required for the care of their child/ward attending a Wild Words event.
- All child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.
- A child in need of personal support because of illness, physical needs or any form of distress, shall be referred in the first place to his/her parent/guardian. In the absence of a guardian, the staff member who is working with or supervising that activity will provide such support. A parent/guardian or teacher should inform a member of staff if there are any specific needs required during a child's participation at a Wild Words event.

## 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.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Non-compliance with Wild Words' Child Protection Policy	All staff and volunteers are provided with the Child Protection Policy. Any breach of the Child Protection Policy will be reported to the relevant line manager. The Child Protection Policy is reviewed every 24 months.
Delay in making referrals to Tusla	All staff are trained and supported to ensure they can act promptly and not delay in contacting the Mandated Person or Tusla when they deem a referral may be required.
Receipt of complaints of alleged child abuse where a Wild Words staff member, volunteer or contractor is the alleged perpetrator.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee.
Receipt of complaint of alleged child abuse where a parent or guardian is the alleged perpetrator.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. The school will be notified.
Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla.
A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla.

## Procedures:

Wild Words' Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, and the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures, support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our services
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children
- Procedure for provision of, and access to, child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla or the Gardaí as appropriate
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

## Implementation:

Wild Words recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Statement will be reviewed on 2 July 2021 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: Orlagh Kelly, Chairperson, Wild Words Children's Book Festival

## Name and contact details:

Wild Words Children's Book Festival, c/o The Reading Room, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Tel 071 96 71580. For queries in relation to this Child Safeguarding Statement please contact Orlagh Kelly Mandated Person, at the address above or email [info@wildwords.ie](mailto:info@wildwords.ie).