



Wicklow County Council Child Safeguarding Statement

- 1. Name of service being provided:** Local Authority
- 2. Nature of service:** Wicklow County Council employs circa 850 people across wide functional areas delivering a comprehensive range of services. The Council has a number of roles, primarily the delivery of key services such as housing, planning, recreational, community and cultural, as well as roads, infrastructure and emergency services. It also has a regulatory and enforcement role along with a defined role in social inclusion, sustainable development, community participation, and economic development and enterprise support.
- 3. Principles to safeguard children from harm:** Wicklow County Council is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in the delivery of all our services and activities. The Local Authority has an overall corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard the children accessing the Local Authority Services and Activities.

Wicklow County Council is committed to:

- Promoting general welfare, health development and safety of children;
- Ensuring safe management procedures are in place for all staff and volunteers including: robust recruitment, selection, supervision and support procedures;
- Developing guidance and procedures for staff and volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the possible abuse or neglect of a child involved in the services or activities of the Local Authority;
- Ensuring Designated Child Protection Liaison Officers are appointed and accessible;
- Ensuring that the Local Authority has procedures in place to deal with an allegation of abuse made against an employee/volunteer;
- Raising awareness in the organisation about potential risks to children's safety/welfare;
- Developing procedures for responding to accidents and complaints;

- Developing and maintaining clear record keeping procedures;
- Ensuring a Code of Behaviour is in place to provide employees and volunteers with clear guidance on how to treat children and young people in the organisation;
- Developing a policy of interagency cooperation with Tusla and other agencies involved in the protection of a child.

Local Authority's child-centred approach

Wicklow County Council's child-centred approach means to:

- Treat all children equally
- Listen to and respect children
- Involve children as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (verbal and physical)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Treat all children as individuals
- Respect a child's personal space
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids
- Lead by example
- Be aware of child time limitations e.g. school/exams when scheduling activities
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Be aware of the *Equal Status Act 2000-2010* which relates to discrimination based on nine grounds:
 - Gender
 - Civil Status
 - Family Status
 - Age
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Disability

- Sexual Orientation
- Membership of the Traveller community
- Use all information in respect of children only for the purpose for which it is given, subject to child protection concern(s).

4. Risk Assessment: Risk assessments are carried out to consider the potential for harm to come to a child while availing of our services.

5. Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with 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*. 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 service:

- Wicklow County Council Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children;
- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service;
- 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;
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

6. Reporting a Concern

Anyone can report a concern about a child. If you have any concerns about a child, you should report it to Tusla. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Any member of the public who has a concern about a child can contact the Tusla local social work duty service in the area where the child lives for advice about reporting your concerns.

In the event of any emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with Tusla, you should contact [An Garda Síochána](#).

If a child is in danger outside office hours you can contact the Gardaí.

If you require any further information on the Local Authority's Policies and Procedures, please contact one of the following:

- Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer: Mr. Michael Nicholson, Director of Services, Community cultural and Social Development: mnicholson@wicklowcoco.ie and 0404 20100
- Ms. Mary Rose Walker, Senior Social Worker, Wicklow County Council, mrose@wicklowcoco.ie – 04040 20100
- Ms. Helen Purcell, Senior Executive Officer, Enterprise and Corporate Services: hpurcell@wicklowcoco.ie ; 0404 20100
- Mr. Brendan Martin, Wicklow County Librarian, Community Cultural and Social Development: bmartin@wicklowcoco.ie; 01 28866566
- Ms. Máire Halvey, Administrative Officer, Community Cultural and Social Development: mhalvey@wicklowcoco.ie, 0404 20100

Further information on Child Protection – www.tusla.ie

7. Relevant Person: The Senior Executive Officer, Enterprise and Corporate Services is the first point of contact regarding this statement

8. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going 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 services.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on the 1st of December, 2025, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: 
Emer O'Gorman
Chief Executive
Wicklow County Council

5th December, 2023.