



Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Statement

Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland is a national charity and company limited by guarantee working on behalf of people with dyspraxia, also known as developmental coordination disorder (DCD).

In accordance with the requirements of 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.**, the Board of Management of Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland works with and on behalf of people with dyspraxia/DCD by providing information, offering appropriate support services, engaging in advocacy and raising awareness of dyspraxia/DCD. Services offered include: information; education programmes and webinars for children, families and professionals, online social activity groups for children, assessment training for Occupational Therapists, clinical therapeutic interventions, and lobbying and advocacy programmes.

Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland staff and volunteers have a variety of levels of contact with children and young people engaging with our various services across the country. This ranges from minimal contact during the course of a year to direct engagement through our online groups, advocacy programmes and annual outings. Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland employs three staff members and 20+ volunteers across the country.

Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland agrees that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations.

- We will fully comply with our obligations under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children.
- We will fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child safeguarding matters.
- We actively promote safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- We will fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland believes that the safety and welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. We aim to ensure that through our interactions the best interest of the child is paramount. Dyspraxia/DCD is committed to the safeguarding of children through the following processes:

- Comprehensive recruitment and vetting processes for all staff and volunteers.
- Comprehensive training programmes which staff are required to complete.
- Clearly defined and communicated standards of service provision.
- A detailed Child Protection Policy is in place, which includes training requirements, a Code of Conduct and procedures for dealing with child protection concerns or reports.

Risk Assessment

Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland management has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Taking the definition of Harm in relation to a child as: “assault, ill treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or sexual abuse of the child”. The latest risk assessment was completed in February 2022 by the CEO in consultation with staff. Below is a list of the areas of potential risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks. All services manage risks by following agreed organisational policies and procedures; the list below is an amalgamation of procedures in place across the organisation.

| | Risk identified | Procedure in place to manage identified risk |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Child may be subject to harm from staff member or volunteer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive recruitment and vetting procedures are in place including Garda Vetting for any member of staff or volunteer for whom vetting is required. • Code of conduct is in place for all staff. • All staff and volunteers who engage with children complete Tusla’s e-learning module in relation to the Children First Act 2015. • Online activity groups are supervised by two facilitators at all times. There are no breakout rooms in online activity groups. • Therapeutic sessions are carried out with the child and parent/guardian both in attendance for each session. |
| 2 | Child may be subject to harm from other children while accessing our services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear boundaries for children using our services, and an anti-bullying policy is in place. • Online activity groups are supervised by two facilitators at all times. There are no breakout rooms in online activity groups. • A code of conduct for each group is agreed at the outset with the children. |

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| 3 | Delay in making referrals to Tusla | All staff and regular volunteers are trained and supported to ensure they can act promptly and not delay in contacting the Designated Liaison Person, a Mandated Person or Tusla when they deem a referral may be required. |
| 4 | A child makes a disclosure | All staff and regular volunteers know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liaison Person, a Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. |
| 5 | A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff | All staff and regular volunteers know the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Liaison Person, a Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. |
| 6 | Children may be witness to / at risk due to domestic violence in the home | Child protection policy is followed, and referral made to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochana, as appropriate. |

Procedures

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:

- 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;

All procedures listed are available upon request (and detailed in our Child Protection policy).

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 service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in February 2023 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Date: 14.02.2022

Signed:  for Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland (the Provider)

Sharon Lane, CEO, Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland, Carmichael Centre, 4 North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, DO7 RHA8

For queries, please contact Fay Dunn, the Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015, and the Designated Liaison Person. fay@dyspraxia.ie T: 018747085.