



Child Protection & Welfare Policy (CPWP)

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
Policy Owner:	Head of Child Protection & Team Well-being	Next review Date:	September 2019
Approver:	LT	Version No:	7
Date Approved:	16/11/2014	Version approved:	12/9/18

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1.1 Child Safeguarding Statement

Soar is a collective movement which believes that there is greatness within all young people. We create and deliver early intervention-preventative, wellness workshops for young people aged 12 to 18 years from all backgrounds.

Our workshops empower young people to thrive, believe in themselves and fulfil their true potential. Within a safe and supportive environment, they are given the opportunity to be themselves and explore any challenges that hold them back from doing so.

Commitment to Safeguarding Children from harm

- Children's safety, welfare and protection are of paramount importance at Soar. We believe that every young person has the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- Our policy and procedures to safeguard children are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017, Child Safeguarding: A guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure, Tusla, 2018, and the Children First Act 2015.
- Our policy applies to all staff and non staff members, volunteers, board members and work experience students. All the above must abide by the policies and procedures of this policy.
- We will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every 2 years or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
- Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection

DLP/Mandated Person: Babs Leonard 085 8565459	Deputy Liaison Person: Orlagh Reilly 085 8565458
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Policies and Procedures

As required by the Children First Act 2015 and Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 the following safeguarding policies and procedures are in place:

- A Relevant Person has been appointed
- A Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy has been appointed
- Child Safeguarding Policy Statement and Procedures
- Procedure for dealing with allegations against a staff/non-staff member
- Recruitment process for members
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Code of Behaviour for safeguarding young people
- Induction pack and procedure in place
- Complaints procedure in relation to child safety and protection
- Social media policy
- Sexual Health policy
- Other policies

Implementation and Review

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. The Soar Foundation are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm.

This statement will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

This statement has been published on our website and is displayed in our office. It is available for all staff and volunteers and is readily accessible on request.

1.2 Aims and Purpose of Soar's CPWP

Children's safety, welfare and protection are of paramount importance at SOAR. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015 and Our Duty to Care are the statutory and legal documents that underpin Soar's CPWP.

We believe that every young person has the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. We have a moral duty of care. Soar believes that every young person should have the opportunity to grow and develop in a safe and caring environment that allows them to be themselves. Promotion of their wellbeing and providing a vast range of opportunities for young people to be themselves, to grow in a safe environment and allow them to reach their full potential, to set goals in life that will help them to be successful is central to what Soar does. Soar takes into account their age and ability to understand the content of our



programs, offering age appropriate activities and we believe that this does not compromise their protection and wellbeing, they should be involved in matters affecting their lives.

Soar's mission is to empower all young people to thrive, to believe in themselves, to build self-esteem and emotional awareness. Soar acknowledges the multicultural and diverse context in which young people are now growing up in, Irelands society is changing and so are its needs. Soar will endeavour to ensure a sensitive approach to all relevant matters, being aware of cultural, environmental and social factors beyond the control of young people, families and carers.

In order to maximise the safety and welfare of all young people that will take part in Soar programs, it is essential that it implements a CPWP that meets all legal criteria. The well-being and protection of all young people is our most important priority. Therefore, Soar's aim is to implement a CPWP that will be communicated to all members, staff, participants, families and guardians as well as reviewed by Soar's Designated Liaison Person (see Appendix for Contact details) every year or more regularly if it is required. It is each individual's duty to be familiar with Soars protection policy and to adhere to it. Soar will ensure this by providing appropriate briefings and training to all members.

'All organisations involved with children have an obligation to provide them with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and safeguard them from abuse.'

Organisations may also be legally responsible for their failure to provide adequate care and safeguards for children in their care.'

(Children First, 2011, S4.7.1)

Early intervention is a key factor in promoting wellbeing, particularly if the young person is vulnerable or at risk. The prevention and detection of child abuse or neglect requires a coordinated multidisciplinary approach, effective management, clarity of responsibility and on-going training. The right assessment is crucial to determine the possibility of abuse or negligence. When there are reasonable grounds for believing a young person may have been, or is at risk of any form of abuse or negligence, Soar will proceed according to the steps laid out in its CPWP.

Soar stresses that every person has a moral duty to act on behalf of young people and their safety. It is every individual's responsibility to know Soar's Designated Liaison Person and their emergency contact information and to be

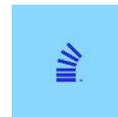


familiar with the appropriate procedure when dealing with a disclosure. (Please see Appendix for Contacts information).

If any person within the organisation has concerns they will know to contact Soar's Designated Liaison Person for child safety who will assess the situation in accordance with Soars CPWP.

An informal consultation with Tusla, Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker could be made to seek advice and to decide whether a formal referral to the Child and Family Agency is warranted. If criteria are met, a new referral is launched by Social Work Services.

In the event of an emergency, where a young person is at immediate danger and it is not possible to contact the HSE Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker, Soar will contact An Garda Síochána (Please see Appendix for Contact Information).



1.3 Confidentiality statement

The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a young person is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

Therefore, Soar will ensure the effective protection of young people by sharing and exchanging relevant information, with care and sensitivity, regarding concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect 'on a need to know' basis. Soar is committed to cooperating with Tusla, Child and Family Agency to ensure the protection of young people as well as attending as required, formal child protection and welfare meetings organised by Tusla, Child and Family Agency. Soar can also provide support for the young person or indeed a family member by attending relevant meeting(s) with the young person or family member.

All members will be given the right training in how to handle delicate information, taking full account of legal requirements. **Soar cannot and will not guarantee secrecy or confidentiality if by doing so the welfare of the young person is put at risk.**

The parent/guardian must be given any information relating to their young person unless to do so would endanger the young person. The safety of the young person is paramount.

It is Soars commitment to gather information in a respectful and purposeful manner only. Records will be taken and kept in a safe and confidential manner. Only those individuals with the ability and legal responsibility to ensure the protection of young people will have access to the records. Records will be stored in a designated place in a secure manner that ensures they are only available on a strictly 'need to know' basis. It is the responsibility of Soar managers to ensure that files are kept up to date and good recording practices are maintained. Soars policy and procedures regarding this matter are in accordance to ***The Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 and Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and HSE Retention standards.***

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of the HSE or to any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.



This person may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to, and including, dismissal. However, in the event of false reporting of child abuse, where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities 'knowing that statement to be false' a new criminal offence has been created designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.



1. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE

SOAR is committed to ensuring the protection and welfare of the young people taking part in their programs. Therefore, Soar establishes its Code of Behaviour which is the standard of expected ethical behaviour for everyone within the organisation in the process of carrying out their every-day work.

This Code applies to ALL SOAR MEMBERS:

- Soar Staff, Crew Members, Supporters, Volunteers and Trainees.
- Participants and their parents or guardians.
- Board Members.

Soar policies and procedures are set **in accordance with HSE regulations** and standards.

Soar is determined to implement all necessary steps to ensure that all members understand their roles in the organisation, making available the Code of Behaviour, Child Welfare & Protection Policy, as well as all other Policies and Procedures in Soars Induction Pack. It is everyone's responsibility to be familiar with these, to act according to them and to communicate to the appropriate members any concerns.

All members of Soar must **treat young people and all other members equally** in line with the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2004. We do not approve of any form of favouritism and our crew members should not become overly involved with any one young person. Soars Core values are to deal with all matters with respect, sensitivity, empathy, confidentiality (need to know basis), integrity and to ensure the safety of young people at all times. Soar, in order to achieve this, describes extensively all roles and responsibilities with the organisation as well as designating a Liaison person as a resource to all members.

Soar expects from all people involved with the organisation **to know the Designated Liaison Person**, his/her contact details as well as the Emergency Contact numbers when the designated liaison person cannot be reached. **Soar stresses that it is everyone's moral duty to report if they suspect there are reasonable grounds for child protection concerns** and to be familiar with the appropriate procedure when dealing with a disclosure and that they act in line with Soar's reporting policy.

Under no circumstances, will a member of Soar deal with a child protection matter involving a young person on their own. That is, you may be alone while the young person makes the disclosure to you but you are then obliged to



immediately report your concern to the Designated Liaison Person as a first point of contact and the Deputy Liaison person if the Designated Liaison Person is on annual leave or on sick leave. Please read the section Dealing with a Disclosure for further guidance.

When dealing with a matter that requires privacy, Soar will ensure to meet the needs of the young person, however, doors **must** remain open at all times, to ensure our practice is in line with all safety and protection requirements. When dealing with the assisted needs of a young person, Soar members will do so with respect, in a sensitive manner that ensures the dignity and integrity of the young person are not affected by any means. Soars crew will strictly adhere to Soar's safety and welfare policies as well as consult relevant members of Soar, the parents and also the young person. All parties should feel confident and comfortable with the assistance provided.

Soars primary aim is the protection of young people and to create a safe environment where they can learn and have fun. Soar will endeavour to ensure best recruitment practises, to adhere to **adult:child ratios** and meet all safety and health requirements. All activities will be age appropriate. Also, it includes the Garda Vetting of all members, those who have relevant contact with young people at Soar.

***Adult:Child Ratios** = 1 adult per group of 8 young people, plus one other adult and allowing an additional adult for each group of 8 thereafter.

Soar values the importance of training and developing specific skills to ensure effective child protection. Therefore, we will provide an induction to our CPWP as well as on-going child protection and welfare training to ensure all members have a clear understanding of what their duties are. During the recruitment process, Soar explains to all candidates their obligation to attend those sessions. We are committed to providing the best available training, consequently, we will review our induction and training sessions on an annual basis.

When a situation requires the use and or storage of young people's images, Soar members will do so in line with our *Photography and Filming Policy* (see 4. Policies and Procedures). **We will not film or take pictures of any young person without prior consent of their parents/guardians or if the young person shows signs of discomfort.** It is our responsibility to use technology and electronic communication in a respectful manner, and according to HSE standards.



2.1 Roles and Responsibilities of all Soar Members

- ✓ All members of Soar must be fully committed ensuring the welfare of young people is of paramount importance.
- ✓ Will treat all young people equally, with respect and sensitivity. Integrity and dignity must be granted at all times.
- ✓ All people involved in Soar will listen to the young people, take seriously what they say and make themselves available and accessible.
- ✓ All Soar members must be knowledgeable about and follow Soars CPWP and all other policies and procedures. To ensure this, all members must complete a Signing Up Form for Soar's Induction Pack, once they have read and understood all Soar policies and procedures.
- ✓ You must know Soar's Designated Liaison Person. You should contact her/him if you have any concerns regarding the welfare of a young person.
- ✓ All members of Soar must be familiar with the signs and symptoms of all types of abuse. To do so, may prevent any further harm. Also you must be knowledgeable about Soar's policy when dealing with a disclosure and adhere to it.
- ✓ Post all Soar workshops and programmes all relevant follow up information regarding the care of young people must be shared with them and their parents where possible, Soar's Child Protection Team will deal directly with the Care Team in each school for an Aftercare Workshop Debrief e.g. support and referral to curative support organisations such as Tusla, Pieta House, Aware, Headstrong, Grow and BeLongTo. When dealing with the assisted needs of a young person all parties involved should feel comfortable with the care provided.
- ✓ Disclosures must be handled with sensitivity and care. During a school workshop or at a Soar event, training etc. Soar members should not be alone with a young person, there must always be another member of staff in the vicinity within earshot or eyeshot.
- ✓ All doors must remain open at all times. By no means, may any staff member of Soar close a door to a room behind them in which they are alone with a young person, unless the door has a window where full view into the room is clear.
- ✓ You must not promise a young person you will keep their secret, if to do so could put them at further risk.
- ✓ Soar has a One-To-One Working Policy which guides all Soar members on the process and procedures for working with a young person on a one-to-one basis for structured planned pieces of work. You can read this Policy in Section 4.1.



- ✓ Soar staff are not in a position to tell a young person what may or may not happen once information is passed to the Tusla, Child & Family Agency through the Designated Liaison Person. What happens next is unknown and giving an idea on what may or may not happen could be misinforming/misguiding the young person.
- ✓ All members must be aware of pick up times and locations. In the event of a parent being late. (Soar events and training etc.)
- ✓ It is the responsibility of the school Soar are visiting that the young person is not left unattended.
- ✓ Under no circumstances, will a member of Soar arrange to meet with a young person during their personal time i.e. outside of working hours.
- ✓ Soar supports the policy of appropriate physical contact as a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for young people. However, contact should be in an open environment and should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned and appropriate for the moment as comfort.
- ✓ Inappropriate behaviour/language by a young person will not go unchallenged with the utmost of care and support for all involved
- ✓ Soar respects and promotes the principles of equality and diversity and works with all young people in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish constitution and law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ✓ Soar will provide Induction and training sessions that all members of Soar are expected to attend.
- ✓ All members will give accurate and truthful information to Soar.
- ✓ All Soar staff in a relevant role within Soar are Garda Vetted

Any breach of Soar's Code of Behaviour will be dealt with formally or informally depending on the nature of the breach.



2.2 Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person

Soars Designated Liaison Person is: Babs Leonard YouthProtection@soar.ie

Personal contact number for Babs Leonard given to all relevant staff, trainee facilitators and volunteers.

It is our Designated Liaison Persons main responsibility to ensure the **safety and protection of all young people**. Any concerns regarding their welfare should be addressed by him/her in a very sensitive manner and accordingly to SOAR's policies and procedures.

If Soars Designated Liaison Person is on either annual or sick leave the Deputy Liaison person will deal with all matters relating to Child Protection & Welfare.

Soars Deputy Liaison Person is: Orlagh Reilly Orlagh.reilly@soar.ie

Personal contact number for Orlagh Reilly given to all relevant staff, trainee facilitators and volunteers.

Role:

- To be a **resource to all SOAR members** if they have any concerns about the welfare of a young person.
- To listen to and to **take into account everything a young person has to say**. To involve them in any decision making when appropriate.
- To be **accessible** to everyone with the organisation.
- To treat all matters with respect, confidentiality (**need to know basis**) and the privacy required.
- Provide **information and advice on child protection** with the organisation. **Update SOAR's policies and procedures** as required and to make sure they are followed as established.
- To be aware of any new developments, to **undertake any relevant training** and to ensure the right training is provided for all SOAR members.
- To **act as a liaison** with outside agencies as appropriate.
- **Be familiar with and carry out the reporting procedure** as contained in this document, ensuring the relevant information is provided at the time of a referral. **Consult informally with the local duty social work department to clarify areas of concerns regarding young people.**
- If a young person is **at immediate danger** and it is not possible to contact the Tusla, Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker, the Liaison person will **contact An Garda Siochana** (Please see Appendix for Contact Information).



Responsibilities:

- To promote best practises at all times that ensure child protection and welfare.
- Communicate with statutory agencies, SOAR members, parents and young people as appropriate.
- To encourage everyone within the organisation to report if they have any concerns about the welfare of a young person. To make available information regarding the protection of those reporting if the referral was carried out in good faith.
- If she/he believes there are no reasonable grounds for reporting the incident/concern, he/she will write a statement detailing the reasons why further action was not taken.
- To ensure best practises when keeping records of all incidents or reports, the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome. To follow up in cases where concerns were raised but there was no sufficient proof to guarantee a referral.
- To attend relevant training to ensure the Child Protection Policy and Procedures are current and up to date.

It can be difficult to know whether or not your suspicions are real, so before you act on them, ask yourself these questions:

- Is there any other reason why the young person or parent might be behaving in a particular way?
- Is there a pattern to this type of occurrence?
- Did you or anyone else see what was happening?
- Has the young person said anything to indicate that he or she is being harmed?
- Could injuries or signs have been caused another way?

If you have considered these questions and you are still concerned, it is likely that you have reasonable grounds to take some action.



3. Youth and Child Protection

3.1 Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

3.2 Categories of abuse:

3.2.1 Neglect

Child neglect is the most frequent category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. In addition to being the most frequently reported type of abuse; neglect is also recognised as being the most harmful. Not only does neglect generally last throughout a childhood, it also has long-term consequences into adult life. Children are more likely to die from chronic neglect than from one instance of physical abuse. It is well established that severe neglect in infancy has a serious negative impact on brain development.

Neglect is associated with, but not necessarily caused by, poverty. It is strongly correlated with parental substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental ill-health and disability.

Neglect can be defined in terms of *an omission*, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Types of neglect:

A distinction can be made between 'wilful' neglect and 'circumstantial' neglect.

'Wilful' neglect would generally incorporate a direct and deliberate deprivation by a parent/ carer of a child's most basic needs, e.g. withdrawal of food, shelter, warmth, clothing, contact with others. **'Circumstantial' neglect** more often may be due to stress/ inability to cope by parents or carers.



Disorganised/chaotic neglect: This is typically where parenting is inconsistent and is often found in disorganised and crises-prone families. The quality of parenting is inconsistent, with a lack of certainty and routine, often resulting in emergencies regarding accommodation, finances and food.

Depressed or passive neglect: This type of neglect fits the common stereotype and is often characterised by bleak and bare accommodation, without material comfort, and with poor hygiene and little if any social and psychological stimulation. The household will have few toys and those that are there may be broken, dirty or inappropriate for age. Young children will spend long periods in cots, playpens or pushchairs. There is often a lack of food, inadequate bedding and no clean clothes.

Chronic deprivation: This is most likely to occur where there is the absence of a key attachment figure. It is most often found in large institutions where infants and children may be physically well cared for, but where there is no opportunity to form an attachment with an individual carer. In these situations, children are dealt with by a range of adults and their needs are seen as part of the demands of a group of children.

Consequences:

- Serious development delays.
- Health issues.
- Poor homework routines and absence from school.
- Sense of hopelessness and anxiety.
- Attachment Disorders.
- Disruptive attention-seeking behaviour.
- High number of incidents/accidents.



3.2.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. It is found typically in a home lacking in emotional warmth. The emotional needs of the children are not met; the parent's relationship to the child may be without empathy and devoid of emotional responsiveness.

Examples of emotional abuse:

- Disparagement, criticism, threat and ridicule.
- Rejection, lack of comfort and love and lack of attachment.
- Lack of proper stimulation, lack of praise and encouragement, inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development.
- Family conflicts and/or violence, inappropriate non-physical punishment. Children who are physically and sexually abused and neglected **also** suffer from emotional abuse.

Consequences:

- Insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem.
- Educational and developmental underachievement.
- Oppositional behaviour, extreme difficulty building relations.

3.2.3 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Examples of Physical Abuse:

- Bruises, fractures, swollen joints.
- Burns/scalds, abrasions/lacerations;
- Haemorrhages (retinal, subdural), damage to body organs;
- Poisonings – repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol).
- Use of excessive force in handling, severe physical punishment.
- Failure to thrive;
- Coma/unconsciousness, death.

Fabricated/Induced Illness is a form of physical abuse and occurs where



parents, usually the mother, fabricates stories of illness about their child or the cause of physical signs of illness, e.g. through secretly administering dangerous drugs or other substances to the child or by smothering.

Symptoms of alert:

- Symptoms that cannot be explained by any medical tests, never observed by anyone other than the parent/carer.
- Symptoms reported to occur only at home or when a parent/carer visits a child in hospital.
- High level of demand for investigation of symptoms without any documented physical signs.
- Unexplained problems with medical treatment, such as drips coming out or lines being interfered with.
- Presence of un-prescribed medication or poisons in the blood or urine.

3.2.4 Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

*It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child.
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation.
- Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts.
- Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse.
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In



relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

Consequences:

Common immediate effects (these may persist for several days or weeks):

- Shock and withdrawal: the victim may be unable to speak about the experience. S/he may appear 'frozen'.
- Panic and confusion: the victim may be very distraught and may be very frightened and show signs of extreme fear.
- A tendency to dwell on the details of the assault.
- Recurrent and intrusive flashbacks of the assault, where for the individual it feels like a reliving of parts of the experience, with all of the feelings and reactions that were there at the time.
- Sleeplessness and nightmares.
- Hyper vigilance: a person may be on the alert all the time and may be easily startled.
- Calm and rational: some people respond to severe trauma by retreating from the feelings and becoming very reasoned and logical.
- Denial: the person may minimise what has occurred and try to deal with it by behaving as nothing has happened.
- Obsessive washing: the victim may feel dirty and tainted and wash over and over again.
- Physical trauma: injuries such as bruising, cuts or soreness around the genital or anal area may have been inflicted. If the victim was beaten or physically assaulted, there may be other injuries. However, the absence of physical trauma is not an indication that a person has not been raped.

Common long term effects:

- Recurrent and intrusive recollections of the assault.
- Self-blame and guilt: the person may agonise over what it was s/he did which provoked the attack, regardless of the fact that it was not his or her fault.
- Fear: the person may feel unsafe, even in familiar places with people s/he knows.
- Deep emotional pain: the person may experience strong feelings of anger, sadness etc.



- Dramatic mood swings, particularly following exposure to events or places similar to the setting of the assault.
- Difficulty in trusting, even those whom s/he knows and cares for, and difficulty in trusting and feeling safe in the company of adults.
- Sexual difficulties: recollections of the assault may impinge on the person's sexual relationship with his or her partner.
- Impaired concentration and memory.
- Difficulty in coping with normal routines.
- Development of addictions (drink, drugs, food).

3.2.5. Peer abuse

In some cases of child abuse, the alleged perpetrator will be another child. In such situations, it is particularly important to consider how the Tusla, Child & Family Service and other agencies can provide care for both the child victim and the child abuser. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance on the identification of and response to such cases.

General guidelines

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser – i.e. it should be considered a child care and protection issue for both children.

Abusive behaviour that is perpetrated by children must be acted upon. If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance.

As in all cases of child abuse, it is essential to respond to the needs of children who are abused by their peers. Each individual case will require its own unique intervention. Appropriate support and services should be provided to the child and his or her parents/carers as quickly as possible. In the case of child sexual abuse by peers, treatment approaches may include individual treatment and/or group therapy for the child or adolescent.

Children who are abusive towards other children also require comprehensive assessment and therapeutic intervention by skilled child care professionals. Treatment is more likely to be effective if begun early in the child's life.

It is known that some adult abusers begin abusing during childhood and adolescence, that significant numbers will have suffered abuse themselves and that the abuse is likely to become progressively more serious. Early referral and intervention is therefore essential.



Future abuse can be prevented if intervention takes place early in the child's life. Therefore, it is essential that Soar refers all concerns about peer abuse immediately to the Tusla, Child & Family Service. Tusla should establish appropriate treatment programmes to cater for children who engage in abusive behaviour with other children.

It should be anticipated that an allegation of peer abuse will have a detrimental impact on relationships between the alleged abuser, his or her parents/carers and other family members. A negative impact on other social relationships, such as with peers and neighbours, should also be anticipated. As a result, the child and family may experience isolation, and in some situations victimisation, following an allegation of abuse. The child's parents/carers will need support and advice to help them understand the abusive behaviour and to deal with the situation. Active participation and commitment by parents/carers can be an important factor in the success of treatment and may be crucial in influencing the general outcome of the case. It is therefore essential to provide adequate support services to the child and family throughout the assessment and treatment processes within Tusla, Child & Family Service.

Sexual abuse by children and young people:

Research shows that teenagers perpetrate a considerable proportion of child sexual abuse. Such cases should be referred to the Tusla, Child & Family Service. It is important that the different types of behaviour are clearly identified and that no young person is wrongly labelled 'a child abuser' without a clear analysis of the particular behaviour. Four categories of behaviour warrant attention: normal sexual exploration; abuse reactive behaviour; sexually obsessive behaviour; and abusive behaviour by adolescents and young people.

1. Normal sexual exploration: This could consist of naive play between two children that involves the exploration of their sexuality. This type of behaviour may be prompted by exchanges between children, such as 'You show me yours and I'll show you mine'. One of the key aspects of this behaviour is its tone: there should not be any coercive or dominating aspects to this behaviour. Usually, there is no need for child protection intervention of any kind in this type of situation.
2. Abuse reactive behaviour: In this situation, one child who has been abused already acts out the same behaviour on another child. This is serious behaviour and needs to be treated as such. In addition to responding to the needs of the abused child, the needs of the child perpetrator in this situation must also be addressed.



3. Sexually obsessive behaviour: In this type of situation, the children may engage in sexually compulsive behaviour. An example of this would be excessive masturbation, which may well be meeting some other emotional need. Most children masturbate at some point in their lives. However, in families where care and attention is missing, they may have extreme comfort needs that are not being met and may move from masturbation to excessive interest or curiosity in sex, which takes on excessive or compulsive aspects. These children may not have been sexually abused, but they may be extremely needy and may require very specific help in addressing those needs.
4. Abusive behaviour by adolescents and young people: Behaviour that is abusive will have elements of domination, coercion or bribery, and certainly secrecy. The fact that the behaviour is carried out by an adolescent, for example, does not, in itself, make it 'experimentation'. However, if there is no age difference between the two children or no difference in status, power or intellect, then one could argue that this is indeed experimentation. On the other hand, if, for example, the adolescent is aged 13 and the child is aged 3, this gap in itself creates an abusive quality that should be taken seriously.

3.3 Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

- Abandonment or desertion.
- Children persistently being left alone without adequate care and supervision.
- Malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding.
- Lack of warmth.
- Lack of adequate clothing, inattention to basic hygiene.
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.
- Persistent failure to attend school.
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also to emotional deprivation;
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental problems;
- Exploited, overworked.

3.4 Recognising Child Abuse

3.4.1 Guidelines for Recognition



The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child neglect or abuse:

Stage 1: Considering the possibility

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. It should also be considered if the child seems distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. The possibility of child abuse should also be considered if the child displays unusual or fearful responses to parents/carers or older children. A pattern of on-going neglect should also be considered even when there are short periods of improvement.

Stage 2: Looking out for signs of neglect or abuse

Signs of neglect or abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. They can exist in the relationships between children and parents/carers or between children and other family members/other persons. A cluster or pattern of signs is more likely to be indicative of neglect or abuse. Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed and sometimes make direct disclosures. **Disclosures should always be taken very seriously and should be acted upon, with no delay**, for example, by informing the Tusla, Child and Family Agency. The child should not be interviewed in detail about the alleged abuse without first consulting with the Tusla, Child & Family Agency.

This may be more appropriately carried out by a social worker or An Garda Síochána. Less obvious signs could be gently explored with the child, without direct questioning. Play situations, such as drawing or story-telling, may reveal information.

Some signs are more indicative of abuse than others. These include:

- Disclosure of abuse by a young person.
- Age-inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge.
- Specific injuries or patterns of injuries.
- Absconding from home or a care situation.
- Attempted suicide.
- Underage pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.

* Signs in one or more categories at the same time, for example, signs of developmental delay, physical injury and behavioural signs may together



indicate a pattern of abuse.

* Many signs of abuse are non-specific and must be considered in the child's social and family context.

It is important to be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse.

Stage 3: Recording of information

If neglect or abuse is suspected and acted upon, for example, by informing Tusla, Child & Family Service, it is important to establish the grounds for concern by obtaining as much information as possible.

Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information that may be relevant. Care should be taken as to how such information is stored and to whom it is made available.

3.4.2 Points to remember

- The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse. Severe and potentially fatal injuries are not always visible. Neglect and emotional and/or psychological abuse tend to be cumulative and effects may only be observable in the longer term. Explanations that are inconsistent with the signs should constitute a cause for concern.
- Neglect is as potentially fatal as physical abuse. It can cause delayed physical, psychological and emotional development, chronic ill-health and significant long-term damage. It may place children at serious risk of harm. It may also precede, or co-exist with, other forms of abuse and must be acted upon.
- Experiencing recurring low-level abuse may cause serious and long-term harm. Cumulative harm refers to the effects of multiple adverse circumstances and events in a child's life. The unremitting daily impact of these circumstances on the child can be profound and exponential, and diminish a child's sense of safety and well-being.
- Child abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. All signs must be considered in the wider social and family context. Serious deficits in child safety and welfare transcend cultural, social and ethnic norms, and must elicit a response.
- Challenging behaviour by a child or young person should not render them liable to abuse. Children in certain circumstances may present management problems. This should not leave them vulnerable to harsh disciplinary measures or neglect of care.



- Exposure to domestic violence is detrimental to children's physical, emotional and psychological well-being. The adverse effects of domestic violence have been well established.
- While the impact of neglect is most profound on young children, it also adversely affects adolescents. Neglect renders young people liable to risk-taking behaviours, such as running away, early school leaving, anti-social behaviour, mental health and addiction problems, including the risk of suicide.
- It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between indicators of child abuse and other adversities suffered by children and families. Deprivation, stress, addiction or mental health problems should not be used as a justification for omissions of care or commissions of harm by parents/carers. The child's welfare must be the primary consideration.
- Neglectful families may be difficult to engage. Research shows that families may be reluctant to seek help in response to experiencing the factors associated with neglect.
- Families where neglect and abuse are prevalent may go to considerable lengths to deceive professionals. It is important for professionals to approach cases with a wary trustfulness, seek evidence to substantiate claims of improvement and speak with the children concerned individually.
- Social workers need good observation and analytical skills in order to be able to understand the nature of the relationship between a parent and child, to understand signs of non-compliance, to work alongside a family and to come to safe and evidence-based judgements about the best course of action.
- Working in the area of child abuse and neglect is dealing with uncertainty. Social workers and other professionals should adopt a 'respectful uncertainty' on parental reporting of improvement until supported by clear evidence.
- When recognising child abuse the belief that parents/carers or other persons in charge of children would actually harm or neglect them is not easy to sustain. There may be a tendency, therefore, to deny, minimise or explain away any signs that a child is being harmed, even when evidence exists. At times, it is hard to distinguish between abusive situations and those where other problems are present, such as unemployment, poverty, poor housing, addiction, mental illness or isolation. Sympathy for families in difficult circumstances can sometimes dilute personal or professional concerns about the safety and welfare of children. However, the protection and welfare of the child must always be the paramount concern.



3.5 Dealing with a disclosure

(Please ensure disclosures happen on a 1:1 basis only and not in a group setting i.e. school workshop, training or any other setting – if a young person begins to share in a group setting please gently explain that you will speak with them in a 1:1 on the break or at the end of the session).

A young person may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this. You must be knowledgeable of the appropriate procedure to deal with it, Soar's CPWP as well as Soar's Designated Liaison Person and his/her contact details as well as all the emergency contact information (see section 2.2)

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Tell the young person you believe them: Reassure him or her of your belief and support.
- **Stay calm:** Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way by listening to the child compassionately. Try to adjust your way of expression to his/her ability to understand and age.
- **Listen to the young person:** Allow the young person to take his/her time to tell you about the problem. Do not ask leading questions or specific details. Avoid making suggestions. Take what the child is saying seriously. Under no circumstances should you do any investigating with the young person. You are simply actively listening, reflecting back to them what they have expressed to ensure you understood correctly but you are NEVER investigating.
- **Reassure him/her:** Tell the young person he/ she has done the right thing by telling you. Stress what is happening to him/her it is not his/her fault. Avoid showing any extreme reaction to what the child is saying or any judgement on the alleged abuser, have in mind it is often a close person. By doing so, the child could feel threatened and stop telling you.
- **Be honest with the young person:** Tell the young person that it is not possible to keep that information a secret, and that you are trying to help him/her. Give them a general indication of what would happen following this conversation with them. Reassure the young person by saying that you are there for him/her and want to help. **Let the young person know who you will speak with i.e. the Child Protection Officer within the school and also the Designated Liaison Person in Soar.** What happens after the



conversation with the young person & the information being passed to the Designated Liaison Person is unknown to you.



- **Carefully record the details. See appendix for form to be completed by FIT/FAC/All Soar members section 5.6 of this policy.**
- **Pass on this information to the Designated Liaison Person by phone followed by email asap.**

The procedure is exactly the same if you have a Welfare issue or concern. All Child Protection concerns will be given to Tusla, Child & Family Agency by the Designated Liaison Person. Not all Welfare concerns will require this course of action, the Designated Liaison Person will speak with the school, young person, parent and or guardian and relevant support options/referrals will be advocated.

Retrospective Disclosure made by an adult:

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhoods. Such disclosures often come to light when adults attend counselling. **It is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any young person who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in such disclosures (i.e. if the person is still alive young people may still be at risk from them).**

If any risk is deemed to exist to a young person who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the counsellor/health professional **should report the allegation** to the Tusla, Child & Family Service without delay. If the person does not share the name of the alleged abuser a report cannot be given to Tusla. It is the decision of the person themselves to decide if they wish to share the name or not. Your role is to gently suggest that if the alleged abuse is still alive other young people may be at risk BUT it is their decision to give the name or not.

If a member of staff or volunteer receives information in respect of a suspicion of child abuse/welfare from a **third party**, this must be reported, regardless of any consideration in respect of confidentiality, to the local Child and Family Agency Social Work Service, which will then investigate the concerns.

Remember: If a person has opened up to you it is because they trust you. You can give the same comfort and support you would give to anyone in crisis, be it due to bereavement, an illness, or sexual abuse. Be aware that the person may find it difficult to talk, or may not always wish to talk. Try to be open and available without placing him or her under pressure. Reassure him or her of your belief and support.

The HSE National Counselling Service is in place to listen to, value and understand those who have been abused in childhood (see www.hse-ncs.ie/en). The service can be accessed either through healthcare



professionals or by way of self-referral (Freephone 1800 477477).

Also, *The Rape Crisis Centre 24-hour helpline* is available nationally and is open for immediate help and support on 1800 77 88 88. By calling the helpline a meeting with a counsellor can be arranged.



3.6 Reporting and Recording Suspected or Actual Child Abuse

3.6.1 Reporting

Purpose

This section offers guidance to any individual involved in Soar, both professional and voluntary, working with or in direct contact with young people who may be concerned or who suspect that young people are being abused or neglected or at risk of abuse or neglect. It highlights the standard reporting procedure to be used in passing information to the statutory authorities about child protection concerns.

Responsibility to Report child abuse or neglect

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for professionals in contact with children and young people, such as education and health professionals. Also, it is a very important responsibility for all staff, volunteers, trainees, board of directors of all types of organisations providing services for the community and children.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child must take priority.
- Reports should be made **without delay** to Soars Designated Liaison Person/Deputy Liaison Person and they will report to Tusla, Child & Family Service even if the children are unidentifiable. Please clarify who the 'children' are.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from the child that he or she was abused (disclosure).
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused.
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way.
- An injury or behaviour that 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.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in on-going or further harm to the child.

*Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of



reckless endangerment of children. It states:

'A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

(a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or

(b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.'

- The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

If any person within the organisation has reasonable grounds for concern they will contact Soar's Designated Liaison Person to discuss the situation. An informal consultation with the Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker (see Appendix for Contact details) could be made to seek advice and to decide whether a formal referral to the Child and Family Agency is warranted. If criteria are met, a new referral is launched by Social Work Services.

When reporting child protection and welfare concerns to the HSE Principal Social Worker or Duty Social Worker in the HSE Child and Family Agency, the Standard Report Form must be completed. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the HSE. As much information as possible will be purposely gathered and dealt with sensitively and in accordance to Soar's Child Welfare & Protection Policy.

In the event of an emergency, where a child or young person is at immediate danger and it is not possible to contact the HSE Children and Family Services' Duty Social Worker, Soar will contact An Garda Síochána (Please see Appendix for Contact Information).

- ❖ Any professional who suspects child abuse or neglect should inform the parents/ carers if a report is to be submitted to the HSE Children and Family Services or to An Garda Síochána, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.



The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of the HSE (see Appendix) or to any member of An Garda Síochána (see Appendix). This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals, even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded. Also the NO penalisation by the employer is granted in such circumstances.

All concerns and disclosures will be recorded in accordance to Soar's Record Keeping Policy. Soar's Designated Liaison Person will monitor very closely the welfare of the children and young people that were subject of concern but a report was not initially warranted.

Soar will carefully keep and store records of concerns and all the steps and procedures taken by all members involved including both the school and the parents in perpetuity.

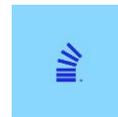
In the event that the Designated Liaison Person decides not to proceed with the report as he/she believes there are no reasonable grounds for concern, he/she must write a statement clarifying the reasons why action was not taken any further. The worker who has suspicions about the welfare of the child or young person must be informed of such a decision and if he/she is still concerned they are free as an individual to consult with, or report to, the HSE or An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 apply once they communicate 'reasonably and in good faith'.

Tusla, Child & Family Service will follow up on all referrals, even if the Standard Report Form has not been used, as the welfare of the child is of paramount importance.

If a member of staff or volunteer receives information in respect of a suspicion of child abuse/welfare from a third party, this must be reported, regardless of any consideration in respect of confidentiality, to the local Child and Family Agency Social Work Service, which will then investigate the concerns.

In the event of a child missing Soar will:

- Ensure other children in their care are looked after appropriately while organising a search for the missing child.
- Have parents/guardians contact details and they will be notified immediately.



- A member of Soar staff will contact An Garda Síochána where necessary.
- A full report is written and filed at Soar Head Office.

In the event of a young person CHOOSING to leave a programme:

- On the school programmes responsibility will fall with the school to facilitate for the young person who has opted out of the Soar workshop.
- Out of school workshops will provide for the young person opting out of the workshop by ensuring a member of staff is notified and parent/guardian is informed as soon as possible.

3.6.2 Record Taking/File Management

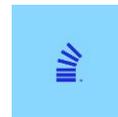
It is Soar's commitment to gather information in a respectful and purposeful manner only. Records will be taken and kept in a safe and confidential manner. All Child Protection Records will be stored in a filing cabinet located on Soar's premises and can only be accessed by those individuals from The Soar Foundation with the ability and legal responsibility to ensure the protection of children will have access to the records (i.e. Soar's Designated Liaison Person). In order to ensure best practice Soar will co-operate in the sharing of records with Tusla, Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána where there is a child protection or welfare concern. Records will be stored in a secure manner that ensures they are only available on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

Record-keeping is of critical importance. It is the responsibility of Soar managers to ensure that files are kept up to date and good recording practices are maintained. Soar's policy and procedures regarding this matter are in accordance to The Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 and Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and HSE Retention standards. Unless accurate records are maintained, the ability to adequately protect vulnerable children may be severely curtailed. Please see the following guidelines:

- Case notes should be succinct, focused and proportionate.
- Best practice requires records to be up to date, written clearly, with explicit details of any decisions taken, while explaining the reason for these decisions.
- Case notes must be signed by the social worker and by the Supervising Team Leader following each supervision session.



- Records should be factual, accurate and legible. They should also be dated and signed after each entry.
- Where possible, case notes should be recorded contemporaneously or on the day that the action took place.
- Records should be accessible at all times during a key worker's absence from the office.



4. Soar's Policies and Procedures

4.1. One to One Working

There are two main reasons which would create the need for One to One Working. The following provides guidance for both of these circumstances:

1) In a reactive situation e.g. where a young person asks to speak with you without warning e.g. before, during or after a school workshop, out of school workshop, youth crew training and/or any other Soar group work with young people.

- If you do need to speak with a young person on your own, try to ensure you are in an open space and in view of others
- If this is not possible try to ensure you are in a space with visual access, or with the door left open nearby other people
- Advise your co-facilitator/co-worker that you are going to another space to speak with the young person and why you are doing so
- Do not meet with a young person on your own in a building, other people must always be nearby

2) As part of a planned structured piece of work e.g. mentoring or transporting a young person to and from a school workshop, out of school workshop, youth crew training and/or any other Soar group work with young people.

- The piece of work should have a clear agreed rationale, aim, methodology and work-plan
- A good supervision structure should be in place to support staff undertaking one to one work, also ensuring any issues or concerns are addressed
- Parents/Guardians must be fully informed as to the nature and purpose of this work, verbal or written consent should be given
- Persons transporting a young person are Garda Vetted

Young people should be advised who they can contact in Soar if they have any concerns or feel uncomfortable about any part of one to one work with Soar. It is also a personal choice if you do not wish to do one to one work as a staff member, so please talk to us about this if you are uncomfortable in any way.



4.2. Bullying (Including Cyber Bullying)

Bullying is a repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against other/s. Bullying behaviour is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations with young people.

It includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening, and hitting and extortion by one or more young people against a victim. A bully operates using furtiveness, threats and fear. In a situation where young person abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another young person, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser. Abusive behaviour that is perpetrated by young people must be acted upon. If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance. Behaviour that is abusive will have elements of domination, coercion or bribery, and certainly secrecy.

Warning Signs: The young person is reluctant to attend our programs or participate, a change in behaviour, shows fearfulness, physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, damage to belongings), not eating, anxiety, shortage of money with vague explanations, attempting suicide or hinting at suicide (note there could also be other reasons for some of the above).

→ Observe carefully the young person and listen to their concerns and other participants who may be aware of the occurrence of an incident.

Soar will not tolerate any form of bullying. To prevent and detect any form of bullying Soar will provide specific training on Bullying and peer abuse to all members.

Soar maintains that a preventive approach is key to avoid bullying behaviours. We understand that by teaching young people co-operative and negotiation skills and raising awareness throughout our programs we will create a safe environment for children and youth.

Soar will endeavour to:

- Create an environment which encourages young people and all members to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying.
- Implement appropriate levels of supervision and monitoring upon identifying that a person is at risk of being bullied.
- Allocate time during our programs or supervision sessions with the aim of raising awareness of bullying behaviour and developing ways to prevent and manage this behaviour.



- Investigate all reported or suspected incidents of bullying inside or outside Soar. If a participant is being bullied outside Soar's programs we will offer him/her support and pass on the information to the relevant person e.g. in school, clubs, with friends etc.
- Respond to incidents of bullying in a fair and equitable manner that is comparable with the nature and extent of the incident.

Action to be taken

Soar establishes that in the event of a bullying behaviour occurring they will implement 'The No Blame Approach': This has the advantage of bringing all parties together under adult supervision and affords the bully the chance to understand the destructive nature of their behaviour without apportioning blame directly. Soar does not tolerate any bullying behaviour, however, we stress that the perpetrator of the bullying may start this behaviour as a result of issues that also need to be dealt with.

The NO BLAME approach

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal, online or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his or her own peer group?
- Reassure the victim his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?



Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed.

- Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at.
- Try asking questions like: Would they like it if it happened to them? Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group; what could we do to see it does not happen again?
- Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on any noticeable reactions without isolating anyone, this is an opportunity to find out how the others in the group feel about bullying.

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps/ controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result. Any steps introduced must be in the ethos of prevention and not punishment and parents of the young people involved should be informed.

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make a victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet them again

Meet everyone, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again re-enforce the idea of the team looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

NOTE: Serious instances of bullying behaviour should be referred to the Tusla Child and Family Agency.



4.3 Disability and Special Needs

Disability is defined in the National Disability Authority Act, 1999 as:

“Disability in relation to a person means a substantial restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in economic, social or cultural life on account of an enduring physical, sensory, learning, mental health or emotional impairment”.

Certain young people are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Such young people include those with disabilities, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection.

Research has shown that abuse of young people with disabilities is a significant problem. Therefore, Soar is committed to providing an equally safe and fun environment for all children regardless of their disability/non-disability.

Often, environmental factors as well as judgemental perspectives disable the young person rather than their impairment. In order to avoid so,

Soar will endeavour to:

- ✓ Provide safe and age/ disability appropriate activities for all young people.
- ✓ Organise activities in buildings/places that are accessible to all. Soar will reasonably accommodate young people with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure all young people's rights and needs are met equally.
- ✓ Be sensitive to communication difficulties some young people may have. Soar members will be fully aware of the young person's method of communication and when required, Soar will arrange a more specific training in order to meet the young person's needs.
- ✓ When dealing with the assisted needs of a disabled young person, Soar members will do so with respect, in a sensitive manner that ensures the dignity and integrity of the young person is not affected by any means. Soar's crew will strictly adhere to the agreed procedure with the young person, parents/guardians and Soar members, taking into account the young person's feelings and choice.
- ✓ If a member of Soar believes there are reasonable grounds of concern regarding the protection and welfare of a disabled young person, they will follow Soar's reporting policy. It may be helpful to explore whether the young person's behaviour is consistent with all carers in order to determine if there are grounds for concern.



4.4 Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as

“the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds which exists, existed, may exist in the future or is imputed to the person concerned”.

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 prohibit discrimination on the following nine grounds:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the traveller community

Soar believes in every person's right to be their self, to feel confident and true to whom they are. Soar promotes a non-judgemental environment and will not tolerate any discrimination on the above or any other grounds. At Soar we value the uniqueness of every individual as a way of enriching our society.

Soar will endeavour to ensure compliance with the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004, at all times.



4.5 Physical Contact

Soar supports the policy of appropriate physical contact as a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children. However, contact should be in an open environment and should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned. By no means will it affect the dignity and integrity of any children or young person and/or parents or guardians.

Soar members should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or physical activities. Soar will endeavour to offer activities that meet safety requirements, providing equipment in good condition, meeting adult-children ratios and supervising the participants at all times.

Soar members' duty is to listen to all participants, to take seriously what they say and to always respond to all complaints and allegations in a sensitive and competent manner.

It is appropriate:

- To comfort young people in a respectful and open environment.
- To respect young people's privacy in bathrooms and changing rooms.
- To ensure all doors remain open, even when dealing with a situation that requires more privacy.
- To encourage young people to report cases of concern.

It is not appropriate:

- To physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a young person, to tell jokes of a sexual nature or to engage in sexually provocative games.
- To discriminate on any grounds.
- To leave young people unattended.
- To give lifts in own cars to young people or young people especially for long journeys unless it is an agreed situation within a working context see One to One Working section 4.1



4.6 Substance Misuse

Soar is committed to provide a safe and fun environment that promotes healthy lifestyles and the development of life skills that have been shown to reduce the prevalence of serious problems faced later in life including depression, substance abuse, homelessness and suicide.

- The use of drugs is strictly forbidden and incompatible with Soar's policy and beliefs.
- The use of alcohol and tobacco is strictly forbidden for young people under the age of 18.
- The use of alcohol and tobacco is strictly forbidden for staff while at work during all programmes, activities and trips.

Soar stresses that all members have a moral responsibility to act as role models for young people.

Soar will endeavour to educate all participants regarding the use of illegal or banned substances, their short and long term-effects and the impact it can have in their lives.

4.7 Recruitment

Soar will endeavour to develop best recruitment and selection of all its members in order to guarantee optimum suitability of all applicants by:

- Advertising all posts, paid or unpaid, as widely as possible, making all vacancies openly available to interested applicants.
- Clearly stating the roles and responsibilities for the post, identifying the minimum level of qualifications and personal skills required to fill the post.
- Providing applicants with information about Soar and its programs. Also, Soar will provide all candidates with an application form so that it collects relevant information about the applicant and his/her previous experience working with young people.
- Requesting all candidates to sign a declaration form stating that there are no reasons why they would be unsuitable to work with young people. They must declare any past criminal convictions or cases pending against them. Soar will strictly adhere to its **excluding policy** if criteria are not met.
- Seeking Garda Vetting and police clearance for other jurisdictions. Soar will also establish **its standard procedure in the event of disclosures**.
- Interviewing all applicants by at least two members of Soar. Interviewers will explore the information supplied by the candidate and assess suitability for the post according to Soar's criteria.



- Requesting of all applicants a minimum of **two recent references**, in writing which will be verified by telephone, letter or a personal visit. Soar will not accept family members as the applicants' referees.
- Asking for documentation that confirms the identity of the applicant, such as a long Birth Certificate, a Driving License or Passport, together with signature and photograph to ensure he/she is not assuming a false identity.
- Establishing **a probationary period** for all posts and its specific length.
- Providing contracts that have been agreed by both parties. It will include a declaration form stating that the new member of Soar has read and understood all policies and procedures, as well as the Child Welfare & Protection Policy and his/her obligation to comply with them.

4.8 Support and Supervision

Given the nature of our work, Soar acknowledges the potential stresses that can result for its members at any given time. In line with best practice adequate structures are in place to reduce work-related stress experienced by all members as far as possible. All Soar members should be supported to carry out their role to the highest possible standard whilst minimising the impact on personal wellbeing. Some steps to include are;

- Adequate and regular supervision of our members;
- Regular review of work load
- Acknowledgement of positive achievements
- Provision of opportunities for personal development, such as training, staff rotation, special projects.
- Development of interagency links
- Putting in place the necessary arrangements and procedures to ensure the safety and security of all staff working directly or indirectly with Young People involved with Soar.
-

In line with best practice Soar has a supervision system in place for all its members to ensure that they are supported if and when is needed. Structures are in place for the supervision and review of all members allowing the opportunity to observe and engage with members at a number of levels. This also makes it possible for management to assess their members' performance and competence in carrying out their role and to address any issues that arise from this in a supportive manner.

4.8.1 Check-Ins:

In Soar formal 'check-ins' take place at regular intervals depending on the



need of the individual at any given time. These check-ins occur between individual Soar members and a member of our Child Protection and Wellbeing Team. They create a confidential safe space for Soar members to be supported in relation to their own personal wellbeing and to explore any issues that may arise. This gives both parties the opportunity to raise any questions that they may have, any problems that they are experiencing/observing, or any suggestions for change that they may wish to make. It is advised to keep a record of the occurrence of all supervision sessions.

4.8.2 Soar's Project Plan Meetings:

These meetings take place monthly with the CEO or Head of Department and the staff member. The purpose of these is for the individual and the CEO/Head of Department to pause and reflect on the individual's performance and aspirations, with the intention of progressing in the right direction for both the individual and for Soar. The components of these meetings are; Reflection, Learning, Growth and Navigation.

4.9 Training:

All Soar members are obliged to carry out a mandatory induction training and child protection training. Following from this, the nature and level of training staff will receive is dependent upon the individual's role within Soar. Training may include the development of particular skills in line with the nature of the individual's role and the organisational need.

The development of an effective and appropriate training programme requires an assessment of members' experience, the extent to which their knowledge meets the requirements of the organisation, and identifying gaps that need to be addressed. Good practice in training means keeping a record of training needs and training provided.

4.10 Vetting

Soar is committed to seek Garda Vetting and police clearance for other jurisdictions of all applicants. Soar is signed up to the E-Vetting Process with the Garda Vetting Unit since 2016.

Soar understands Garda Vetting is part of good recruitment practice, and will endeavour to implement all other reasonable steps to ensure safe recruiting policies.

In response to an online request for vetting, the National Vetting Bureau



releases criminal history information on the person to be vetted to the prospective recruiting organisation. The results of vetting are only one component of Soar's recruitment decision. Therefore, it is Soar's responsibility to adhere to all its policies in order to assess the suitability of an applicant.

We appreciate at Soar that people deserve a second chance and all applicants will be reviewed on a person by person basis by a decision making committee including the Head of Child Protection and Management.

When deciding suitability of an applicant, Soar stresses that the following will be an excluding factor of the applicant's recruitment: Previous conviction of a sexual offence. The national Vetting Bureau will also provide details around 'soft information' i.e. a sex charge but no conviction. There is a threshold of acceptance for other offences such as fraud and assault.

Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts 2012

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 was amended by The Oireachtas in January 2016. The key purpose of the amendments was to provide that certain old minor convictions would not be disclosed in vetting disclosures, and to harmonise certain provisions in the 2012 Act with provisions in the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provides a legislative basis for the mandatory vetting of persons who wish to undertake certain work or activities relating to children or vulnerable persons or to provide certain services to children or vulnerable persons.

The national unit of An Garda Síochána known before as the Garda Central Vetting Unit shall, after the commencement, be known as the National Vetting Bureau. All communications will thereafter emanate from the National Vetting Bureau.

The National Vetting Bureau will provide Registered Organisations with the opportunity to process applications online using our eVetting facility.

Applicants will be invited to apply on line by the Registered Organisation from whom they are seeking vetting.

To use the eVetting service applicants must...

- Be over 16 years old.
- If aged 16-18 years, have submitted signed "Parent / Guardian" consent form.



- Have or have access to a valid email address.
- Have access to the Internet. Have completed the “Proof of Identity” process.

4.11 Communication

Soar will endeavour to communicate in a safe and respectful manner with all parents, crew members and young people.

Social Media – Soar will not promote their social media platforms as a way of communicating while delivering programmes in primary schools, as the legal age to have any profile is thirteen years.

Emails from young people seeking support or wishing to chat to us about a workshop they attended will be replied to from the youthprotection@soar.ie email ensuring safety standards are in line with best practice. These emails may be written by members of staff other than the Child Welfare and Protection Team but the emails will be sent from youthprotection@soar.ie at all times. Exclusions to this may include young people emailing Soar about work experience or communications for events and/or workshops they are attending in the future. Such emails are replied to by the Communications Team or the Workshop Scheduling Team.

The Soar Foundation is devoted to providing high quality programs to all participants, by ensuring all young people have their views taken into consideration and are treated with respect. It is our commitment to provide all information regarding their rights as well as Soar's Child Welfare & Protection Policy and all other policies and procedures, including our complaints procedure in an age appropriate manner by supplying these in a very clear, language appropriate graphic booklets at the start of their participation at Soar. In the event of some participants having communicative difficulties Soar will make use of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) as an alternative communication tool and will endeavour to ensure the use of any other available resources to ensure the inclusion of all participants.

Soar believes that it is crucial to build strong relationships not only with the participants but also with their parents/ guardians as they know best their young person and their likes and dislikes and personal circumstances. To achieve this, Soar will provide information regarding the organisation, its programs and crew members by organising an information evening/ newsletters/booklets. Everyone involved in Soar will be made aware of Soar's Child Welfare & Protection Policy on initial contact with the organisation.



Soar values everyone's input and encourages all parents/guardians to get involved in our programs by sharing all relevant information about the organisation and any other information regarding the welfare of their young person as well as making sure all crew members are accessible and approachable. Soar will endeavour to consider all suggestions where appropriate.

With regard to Soar's out of school programs all parents/guardians will be given sufficient information regarding Soar's activities and a consent form that must be signed and returned to us prior to the activity taking place.

Recommended practice when dealing with under 18's, is to have both:

- 1) Parental/guardian consent
and
- 2) The minor's own consent/assent.

Soar will ensure that all consent forms received are followed up with a phonecall to serve the following purpose:

1. Confirm the validity of contact number supplied (one will need to be collected to be used in case of emergencies).
2. Provide additional assurance that at least one competent adult has provided consent.
3. Provide additional assurance that the consent was informed and give the opportunity for the parent/guardian to ask any questions they may have about the program.

In the event of any incident happening to a Soar participant, his/her parents/guardians will be informed in detail about the circumstances in which it occurred and all steps taken by Soar crew members. An incident/accident form must be signed by both, the parent/guardian told and Soar's crew member.

4.12 Photography and Filming

In line with Soar's photography and filming policy it is strictly forbidden to record, film and/or take pictures of Soar members unless a person is authorised to do so.

Also the use of images or videos for any purpose other than Soar's related programs and activities is strictly prohibited.

In order to comply with Soar's policy, parents/guardians must give express written consent of photographing and filming their young person.



If a participant shows signs of discomfort when filmed or photographed, Soar will not do so even if parents have given consent, as our participants' wellbeing is of paramount importance.

4.13 Safety

In order to create a safe environment for all members of Soar we will have in place a registration system for each young person with all personal details, including their parents/guardians contact details as well as any other person authorised to collect them (if it is an out of school programme). Soar crew members must be familiar with the person (s) authorised to collect the young person. If they have any doubts they must call the parents to ask for consent, prior to handing the young person over to an unknown person. Parents will provide a brief physical description of this person.

Soar will keep a record of: all medical details and any special needs, attendance, and incidents/accidents that may occur. Also records of any complaints, grievances or any unusual patterns will be taken and stored appropriately.

All consent forms must be returned to the Soar crew members prior to the activity taking place.

Soar crew members will be knowledgeable of fire safety procedures as well as first aid procedures and equipment.

All young people will be supervised at all times, by no means will a young person be left unattended. In accordance to Soars policy there will be on duty an adequate number of staff of both sexes, complying with adult: children ratios.

All buildings or outdoors areas being used must be safe and meet required standards. All equipment will be checked regularly and if is not in good condition should be removed.

Soar values the importance of training and developing specific skills to ensure effective child protection. Therefore, we will provide induction in our Child Welfare & Protection and Welfare Policy as well as on-going child protection and welfare training to ensure all members have a clear understanding of what their duties are. During the recruitment process, Soar explains to all candidates their obligation to attend these sessions. We are committed to providing the best available training, consequently, we will review our induction and training sessions on annual basis.



Soar states that we will offer support and supervision to all members of staff by organising team meetings as well as individual sessions. This aims to give an opportunity to raise any concerns, questions and to assess the need for change in policies or practice.

In the event of a member of Soar dealing with or having dealt with a child protection and welfare concern or disclosure, Soar will endeavour to support him/her as they understand they may be afraid of repercussions, being thought insensitive or disloyal. Soar will ensure their protection from all forms of discrimination, including dismissal. A person who makes a report in good faith and in the young person's best interests may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

When appropriate and in line with Soar's primary aim being the welfare and protection of the young person, the individual dealing with the concern or disclosure will be kept updated and informed about the outcomes. Only if there was evidence of a person reporting in a malicious way, knowing that such a statement is false, Soar will promptly act in accordance with its disciplinary policy.

4.14 Travel

It is Soar's Travel Policy that on trips out/away a discussion and exchange of child protection and welfare policies between Soar and host venues will take place prior to the trip. Soar aims to ensure its standards are met at all times by ensuring all host venues are made knowledgeable of Soar's policies and procedures prior to arrival.

Points to consider include:

- Have clear guidelines that address Insurance
- Suitability of accommodation
- Pre-visit to centre
- Staffing issues
- How were the host families selected?
- Garda Vetting
- How many staff went – were adult:children ratios adhered to?
- Prior to departure, consent forms including appropriate dietary requirements and medical information including allergies must be signed and returned by all parents and guardians.

Prior to the trip out/away Soar will provide a detailed programme of events, arranged transport and all contact details to all parents/guardians as well as



any other relevant information.

Also before the trip all members of Soar are made aware of our expectations, roles and responsibilities. All young people will be supervised at all times and made knowledgeable of the rules and expected behaviour. All members of Soar are expected to strictly adhere to our policies and procedures and to be aware of all contact details and accident/emergency procedures. Prior to the trip all members going on the trip will be given guidelines of what to do in the event of an emergency happening.

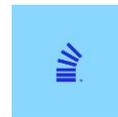
Soar will ensure all health and safety issues are met in line with our policies and according to HSE standards by using facilities, buildings, transports and equipment that comply with the current legislation.

4.15 Accidents/Incidents

It is Soar's aim to create a safe environment for all participants. Therefore, we will endeavour to safeguard all members of Soar by:

- Providing First Aid training to all Soar employees.
- Designating a **First Aid Officer**, that will undertake more specific training and will be responsible for ensuring all necessary contents of the First Aid box are sufficient and in good condition.
- Making available First Aid equipment for all Soar activities and making knowledgeable to all Soar members where they are placed.
- Displaying emergency contact numbers at all times. All members must be familiar with emergency contact numbers.
- Keeping an up to date contact numbers file for all parents/ guardians and Soar members. It is everyone's duty to inform Soar of any changes. Soar will also review it regularly.
- **Putting in place adequate insurance coverage in line with best practice in this field.**
- Having an incident book as well as an accident book, ensuring all records are taken in a secure and accurate manner, providing as detailed information as possible.

Parents will be informed of all accidents/ incidents when by doing so the young person is not put at a further risk and in the event of: existing concerns regarding the welfare of their young person, physical injuries that may or may not need medical assistance, failure to eradicate a conflict by adhering to Soar's policies and procedures, an unusual pattern of behaviour, being repeatedly disruptive or abusive as well as any other circumstances that may be related to their welfare.



4.16 Complaints and Disciplinary

A complaint is defined as “a statement of dissatisfaction about a situation, discomfort or upset caused by grievance, poor practice or failure to meet all standards” as defined in Soar’s policies and procedures.

It must be noted that any complaint or issue concerning suspected child abuse is not covered by the complaints and disciplinary procedures and must be referred to the relevant authorities in accordance with Soars CPWP.

Soar values everyone’s right to express their feelings and concerns about our practice, therefore we have established a Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and will strictly adhere to it as well as make it available to all members of Soar through this document.

Soar has designated a **Complaints Officer, Mark McDonnell – Operations Manager**, who will be responsible for receiving and responding to all complaints without delay. In the event of a young person making a complaint Soar stresses that he/she can approach a worker of their choice to do so as their welfare is of paramount importance.

When Soar’s Complaints Officer is made aware of a complaint, he/she will take the following steps:

- i. Talk to the person privately. This gives them the opportunity to express their concerns, explain how the events took place, and reassure them that the appropriate action will be taken. Where appropriate a complaint form will be made available to this person.
- ii. Talk to other people involved in the situation, possible witnesses. This aims to confirm there were reasonable grounds for the complaint and to clarify all events and circumstances where standards were not met. This meeting must be arranged immediately after the initial interview with the person concerned.
- iii. Soar’s Complaints Officer must deal with the complaint promptly, in a respectful, sensitive and non-judgemental manner. Also, he/she will inform Soar’s management about the complaint and consider what actions should be taken to ensure best practice or to eliminate the cause of the complaint. Issues must be resolved at source.
- iv. Feedback must be given to all people involved **within 48hours**.
- v. When dealing with a matter that Soar cannot resolve due to its severity or insufficient knowledge, the Complaints Officer must seek advice from HSE or other relevant sources.



Accurate and detailed records must be taken of all complaints and action taken in relation to them. Those records will be securely stored in line with Soar's Record Keeping Policy.

4.17 Allegations of Abuse against Workers

The welfare and protection of the young person is of paramount importance to Soar. Therefore, Soar is committed to ensuring that there is no delay in reporting to Tusla, Child and Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána if there are reasonable grounds for concern. It is Soar's aim to cooperate with statutory agencies to ensure the wellbeing of all Soar members.

If a person involved with the organisation has concerns regarding the welfare of a child or young person they must without delay contact Soar's Designated Liaison Person. Together they will discuss the situation and if they believe there are reasonable grounds for concern the Designated Liaison Person will immediately make a report to Tusla, Child and Family Agency. In the event of not being able to contact the Duty Social Worker, Soar will not hesitate to contact An Garda Síochána at any Garda Station. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Soar's management must be informed by the Designated Liaison Person about the allegation as soon as possible (See attached all contact details at appendix).

Soar's first priority is to ensure that no young person is exposed to unnecessary risk. In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of Soar, **urgent necessary protective** measures will be taken. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect young person. Where protective measures penalise the employee, it is important that early consideration be given to the case. Any action taken should be guided by agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice which may or may not include suspension of his/her contract while case is pending and must be in line with the investigating bodies, Tusla, Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána to ensure that Soar's actions do not frustrate any investigations.

If Soar's management is made aware of an allegation being made within the organisation during the execution of that employee's duties, Soar will inform him/her of the fact that the allegation against him/her has been made and its nature. All employees will be afforded an opportunity to respond, which will be passed on to Tusla, Child and Family Agency, when a formal report is granted.



Soar will appoint two different people to deal with the two separate procedures, one for the young person i.e. Designated Liaison Person and one for the employee i.e. another member of management. All stages of the process will be recorded in line with Soar's Record Taking Policy. Also, the parents/guardians of the young person will be informed of all actions planned and taken regarding their rights, their young person's as well as the employee's rights.



5. APPENDICES

5.1.

SOAR Standard Forms or examples of such forms:

- a. Application Form for staff and volunteers**
- b. Child Welfare & Protection Policy Declaration Forms**
- c. Registration Form – out of school programmes**
- d. Consent Form to participate in a Soar program**
- e. Consent Form for trips/overnights**
- f. Photography and Video Consent Form**
- g. Complaints Form**
- h. Standard reporting form**

5.2. Tusla, Child & family Service – Duty Social Worker Departments across Ireland

5.3. Garda Contact Details

5.4. Useful Links.

5.5. Legislation

5.6. Guide for all FAC's & FIT's – Child Welfare & Protection Concerns/Disclosures



5.1 Staff & Volunteer Application Form

Position _____ applied
for: _____

Full Name: _____

Current Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email address: _____ Mobile
number _____

National Insurance Number / PPS number:

List previous experience / involvement in this or any organization. Include experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity:

Qualifications:

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Soar's Code of Behaviour and all other policies? Yes / No

Do you agree to strictly adhere to Soar's Child Welfare & Protection Policy? Yes / No

Have you ever been asked to leave a children/youth organisation? Yes / No (If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)



Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? Yes / No

Do you agree to provide Soar with a minimum of two References? Yes / No

Child Welfare & Protection Policy Declaration forms

The following declarations are to be signed annually by all members. The completed declarations should be held by Soar's Board of Directors in accordance with its policy.

Young People

I, _____ as a participant of Soar's programs, have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and all other Soar's policies and procedures which I have been appropriately made aware of.

Signature of Young person

_____ Date _____

Please print
name _____

Parents/Guardians

I, _____ as a _____ of _____ have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and all other Soar's policies and procedures which I have been appropriately made aware of.

Signature of Mother/Father/ Guardian

_____ Date _____

Please print
name _____

Soar youth facilitators, crew members/management/volunteers/trainees



I, _____ as a _____ of Soar, have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and all other Soar's policies and procedures which I have been appropriately made aware of.

Signature of _____

Date _____

Please print

name _____

Registration Form – out of school programmes

Participant

Surname _____

Forename _____

Address _____

Date _____ of birth _____

Telephone _____ if applicable _____

School _____

Medical conditions/allergies: _____

Likes _____ and dislikes: _____

Who _____ is _____ the _____ child _____ living with? _____

Mother/guardian contact details

Surname _____

Forename _____

Address _____

Date of



birth_____

Telephone_____

–

Work Place_____ Work
phone_____

Father/guardian contact details

Surname_____

Forename_____

Address_____

Date of
birth_____

Telephone_____

–

Work Place_____ Work
phone_____

Emergency contact details

Other than mother/parent/guardian who else has permission to collect the
participant?

His/Her contact
details_____

Brief physical
description_____

Family doctor contact details



Consent Form

Participation at Soar

I, _____ as a mother/father/ guardian
of _____

give fully consent for my child to take part in Soar's activities.

Signature of Mother/Father/
Guardian _____

Date _____

Please print
name _____

Trips/overnights

I, _____ as a mother/father/ guardian
of _____

give fully consent for my child to take part in Soar's trips/outings and
overnights stays.

Signature of Mother/Father/
Guardian _____

Date _____

Please print
name _____

Photography and Filming

I, _____ as a mother/father/ guardian
of _____

give fully consent for my child to be photographed or filmed in a safe and
purposeful manner only. I understand images and/or videos of my child will
not be used by any person other than those authorised by Soar.

Signature of Mother/Father/
Guardian _____



Date _____

Please print
name _____



5.2. HSE Social Work Contact Details

Carlow Duty Social Work Team

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Ground Floor, St. Dymphnas Hospital, Athy Rd, Co. Carlow. **Phone:** 059 9136570 **Office Hours – 9am – 5pm**

Cavan Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency , Drumalee Cross, Co. Cavan.
Phone: 049 4377305 049 4377306 **Office Hours – 9:30am – 5pm**

Clare Duty Social Work Team

Address: River House, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Phone: 065 6863935 **Office Hours – 9am – 5pm**

Cork Duty Social Work Teams

North Lee | South Lee | West Cork | North Cork

North Lee

Address: Child and Family Agency, North Lee Social Work Department, Floor 2 (adjacent to shopping centre), Blackpool, Co. Cork.

Phone: 021 4927000 **Office Hours – 9am – 5pm**

South Lee

Address: Child and Family Agency, South Lee Social Work Department, St. Finbarrs Hospital, Douglas Rd, Co. Cork.

Phone: 021 4923001 **Office Hours – 9am – 5pm**

West Cork

Address: Child and Family Agency, Duty Social Work Department, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co. Cork.

Phone: 028 40447 **Office Hours – 9am – 5pm**

North Cork

Address: 134 Bank Place, Mallow, Co. Cork.

Phone: 022 54100 **Office Hours – 9am – 5pm**

Donegal Duty Social Work Teams

Donegal West Central | Donegal East | Donegal West

Donegal West Central

Address: Child and Family Agency, County Clinic, St. Conals Hospital, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

Phone: 074 9104714 **Office Hours: 9am – 5pm**

Address: Child and Family Agency, Millenium Court, Pearse Rd, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

Phone: 074 9104714 **Office Hours: 9am – 5pm**

Donegal East



Address: Child and Family Agency, Links Business Centre, Lisfannon, Buncrana, Co. Donegal.

Phone: 074 9320420 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Donegal West

Address: Child and Family Agency, Euro House, Killybegs Rd, Donegal town, Co. Donegal.

Phone: 074 9723540 Office Hours: 9am – 5:30pm

Dublin Duty Social Work Teams

Dublin North: Swords | Coolock | Blanchardstown | Finglas | North Inner City

Dublin South: Lord Edward St | Ballyfermot | Dun Laoghaire | Tallaght

Swords

Address: Duty Social Work Department, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin.

Phone: 01 8708000 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office –Dublin North

Blanchardstown

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Roselawn Health Centre, Roselawn Rd, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

Phone:01 6464518 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office –Dublin North

Coolock

Address: Duty Social Work Department , Health Centre, Cromcastle Rd, Coolock, Dublin 5.

Phone: 01 8164200 01 8160314 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office –Dublin North

Finglas

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Health Centre, Wellmount Park, Finglas, Dublin 11.

Phone: 01 8567704 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office – Dublin North City

North Inner City

Address: Duty Social Work Department, 492 North Circular Rd, Parkview, Dublin 1.

Phone: 01 8566856 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office – Dublin North City

Tallaght

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Chamber House, Chamber Square, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Phone: 01 4686289 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office – Dublin South West, Kildare, West Wicklow



Lord Edward Street

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Carnegie Centre, 21-25 Lord Edward Street, Dublin 2

Phone: 01 6486500 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office – Dublin South Central

Ballyfermot

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10.

Phone: 01 6206387 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office – Dublin South Central

Dun Laoghaire

Address: Duty Social Work Department, Our Ladys Clinic, Patrick Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Phone: 01 6637300 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Local Area Office – Dublin South East

Galway Duty Social Work Teams

Oughterard | Galway City | Tuam | Ballinasloe | Loughrea

Oughterard

Address: Child and Family Agency, Oughterard Social Work Department, Health Centre, Oughterard, Co. Galway

Phone: 091 552200 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Galway City

Address: Child and Family Agency, Galway City Social Work Department, Local Health Office, 25 Newcastle Rd, Galway, Co. Galway.

Phone: 091 546366 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Tuam

Address: Child and Family Agency, Child Protection Social Work Department, Mellows House, Care of Health Centre, Vicar St, Tuam, Co. Galway.

Phone: 093 37264 093 37265 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Ballinasloe

Address: Child and Family Agency, Ballinasloe Social Work Department, Health Centre, Brackernagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

Phone: 090 9646200 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Loughrea

Address: Child and Family Agency, Child Protection Social Work Department, Health Centre, 60 Main St. Loughrea, Co. Galway.

Phone: 091 847820 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Kerry Duty Social Work Teams

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Kerry Community



Services, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Phone: 066 7121566 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Address: Child and Family Agency, Killarney Social Work Department, St. Margarets Rd, Killarney, Co. Kerry.

Phone: 064 6636030 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Kildare Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, St. Marys, Craddockstown Rd, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Phone: 045 882400 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Kilkenny Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Office, Childcare Department, Carlow/Kilkenny, St. Canices Hospital, Dublin Rd, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny.

Phone: 059 9136570 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Laois Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Child and Family Centre, Dublin Rd, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Phone: 057 8692567 Office Hours – 9:30am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:30am – 5:00pm Friday

Leitrim Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency. Community Care Office, Leitrim Rd, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim

Phone: 071 9650324 Office Hours – 9:30am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:30am – 5:00pm Friday

Limerick Duty Social Work Teams

Ballynanty | Newcastle West | South Hill | Old Clare Street

Ballynanty

Address: Child and Family Agency Ballynanty Health Centre, Child Protection and Welfare, Ballynanty, Limerick.

Phone: 061 457102 Office Hours – 2pm – 5pm

Newcastle West

Address: Child and Family Agency, Newcastle West Health Centre, Child Protection and Welfare, Health Centre, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Phone: 069 66653 Office Hours: 2pm – 5pm

South Hill

Address: Child and Family Agency, South Hill Health Centre, Child Protection and Welfare, Southhill, Limerick.



Phone: 061 209985 Office Hours: 2pm – 5pm

Old Clare Street

Address: Child and Family Agency, Roxtown Health Centre, Child Protection and Welfare, Old Clare St, Limerick

Phone: 061 483091 Office Hours: 2pm – 5pm

Longford Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Tivoli House, Dublin Road, Co. Longford.

Phone: 043 3350584 Office Hours: 9:00am – 5:30pm Monday to Friday & 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday

Louth Duty Social Work Teams

Dundalk

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Local Health Care Unit, Wilton House, Stapleton Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Phone: 042 9392200 Office Hours: 9:30am – 5:15pm Monday & 9:30am – 5:00pm Tuesday to Friday

Drogheda

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Ballsgrove Health Centre, Ballsgrove, Drogheda, Co Louth

Phone: 041 9870111 Office Hours: 9:30am – 5:15pm Monday & 9:30am – 5:00pm Tuesday to Friday

Mayo Duty Social Work Teams

Castlebar | Ballina | Swinford

Castlebar

Address: Child and Family Agency, St. Marys Headquarters, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Phone: 094 9042283 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Ballina

Address: Child and Family Agency, Ballina Social Work Team, Ballina Health Centre, Mercy Rd, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Phone: 096 21511 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Swinford

Address: Child and Family Agency, Swinford Health Centre, Aras Attracta, Swinford, Co. Mayo.

Phone: 094 9050133 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Meath Duty Social Work Team



Address: Child and Family Agency, Duty Social Work Department, Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Phone: 046 9097870 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Monaghan Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency, 1st Floor, Support Services Building, Roosky, Monaghan Town, Co. Monaghan.
Phone: 047 30426 Office Hours: 9:30am – 5:15pm Monday & 9:30am – 5:00pm Tuesday to Friday

Offaly Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Derry Suite, Castlebuildings, Tara St. Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Phone: 057 9370700 Office Hours: 9:30am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:30am – 5:00pm Friday

Roscommon Duty Social Work Teams

**Convent Road | Golf Links Road | Boyle | Castlerea
Convent Road**

Address: Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Rd, Co. Roscommon.
Phone: 090 6637814 or 090 6637863 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Golf Links Road

Address: Child and Family Agency, Golf links Rd, Co. Roscommon.
Phone: 090 6637505 or 090 6637580 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Boyle

Address: Child and Family Agency, Health Centre, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
Phone: 071 9662087 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Castlerea

Address: Child and Family Agency, Riverside House, Main St. Castlerea, Co Roscommon
Phone: 090 6637851 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Sligo Duty Social Work Teams

Address: Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St. Co. Sligo.
Phone: 071 9155133 Office Hours: 9:00am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday

Address: Child and Family Agency, One Stop Shop, Teach Laighne, Humbert St. Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.

Phone: 071 9120454 087 9299666 Office Hours: 9:00am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday



Tipperary Duty Social Work Teams

North

Address: Child and Family Agency, Duty and Intake Social Work Department, Civic Offices, Limerick Rd, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

Phone: 067 46636 067 46660 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

South

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Team, South Tipperary Community Care Services, Western Rd, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Phone: 052 6177303 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Waterford Duty Social Work Teams

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Service, Waterford Community Services, Cork Rd, Co. Waterford.

Phone: 051 842827 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Dungarvan Community Services, St. Josephs Hospital, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Phone: 058 20906 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Westmeath Duty Social Work Teams

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Rd, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Phone: 090 6483106 Office Hours: 9:00am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Child and Family Centre, St.Lomans Hospital, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Phone: 044 9384450 Office Hours: 9:00am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday & 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday

Wexford Duty Social Work Teams

Address: Child and Family Agency, Gorey Health Centre, Hospital Grounds, Gorey, Co. Wexford.

Phone: 053 9430100 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Address: Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Ely House, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford

Phone: 053 9123522 ext 201 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm

Wicklow Duty Social Work Team

Address: Child and Family Protection Service, Glenside Health Centre, Glenside Rd, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow.

Phone: 0404 60800 Office Hours: 9am – 5pm



5.3. Garda Contact Details

In case of emergency call: 911 or 112

Garda Confidential Line: 01 666 111

For general contact information see <http://www.garda.ie> and click on 'Contact us' or 'Station Directory' for nearest Garda Station to Soars office/event.



5.4 Useful Links

ISPCC

20 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

01 6794944

ispcc@ispcc.ie

ISPCC Childline 1800 666666 (Freephone)

Ombudsman for Children

Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1.

1890 654 654 / 01 865 6800

oco@oco.ie

HSE Health Service Executive

Tusla, Child and Family Agency

www.tusla.ie

Volunteering Ireland

Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7.

01 8722622

info@volunteeringireland.com

Irish Sports Council

Top Floor, Block A, West End Office Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

Tel No. 01-8608800

www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

HSE National Counselling Service

www.hse-ncs.ie/en

Freephone 1800 477477

The Rape Crisis Centre 24-hour helpline

www.drcc.ie

Freephone 1800 77 88 88

International Social Service

HSE West, South East Wing, St. Joseph's Hospital, Mulgrave Street, Limerick.

Tel: 00353 61 461380

Fax: 00353 61 412355

ISS@hse.ie



5.5 Legislation

Note this aims to provide an overview of all legislation Acts mentioned in Soar's Child Welfare & Protection Policy, and it is not a legal document. To access to those Acts please see Government Publications.

Child Care Act 1991

Its purpose is to 'update the law in relation to the care of children who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or who are at risk'. The main provisions of the Act are the strengthening of the powers of the HSE to ensure the welfare and protection of the children and young people, to establish best procedures to facilitate the immediate intervention by the HSE and An Garda Síochána when a child or young person is at risk.

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004

This Act aims to promote equality and prohibit certain kinds of discrimination (with some exemptions) across nine grounds, prohibit sexual harassment and harassment, also prohibit victimisation. It states the requirement of reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities and allow a broad range of positive action measures.

Criminal Justice Act 2006

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of 'reckless endangerment of children'. It states the responsibility of a person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, to act on behalf of the welfare and protection of children and young people. It also states the penalties to be faced if failure to do so.

Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998

This Act came into operation on 23 January 1999. The main provisions of the Act are to ensure the provision of immunity from civil liability to any person that reports child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith'. Also the protection of employees who report under the same grounds. In order to avoid malicious reporting it created a new criminal offence to ensure the protection of innocent people.

Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003

The Data Protection Act 1988 applies to the processing of personal data. It gives a right to every individual to establish the existence of personal data, to



have access to any such data relating to him or her, and to have inaccurate data rectified or erased. It protects people from information being held, disclosed or used for other than lawful purposes.

Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003

The Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 enable members of the public to obtain access, to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy, to information in the possession of public bodies.

6. REFERENCES

- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2011) **Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children**. Dublin: Stationery Office. Available at:
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/child_welfare_protection/ChildrenFirst.pdf
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/child_welfare_protection/ChildrenFirst.pdf
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/child_welfare_protection/ChildrenFirst.pdf
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/child_welfare_protection/ChildrenFirst.pdf
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/child_welfare_protection/ChildrenFirst.pdf
- Health Service Executive (2011) **Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook**. Dublin: Stationery Office. Available at:
<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/services/Children/WelfarePractice.pdf>.
- Department of Health and Children (2002) **Our Duty to Care - The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People**. Dublin: Stationery Office. Available at:
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_Full_Eng.pdf
Fact sheets available at:
http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_FactSheets_Eng.pdf
- Health Service Executive (2011) **Interim Guide for the Development of Child Protection and Welfare Policy, Procedures and Practices**.
- Swim Ireland (2010) **Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures**.
- Children Act 2001.
- Criminal Justice Act 2006.
- Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.
- Data Protection Act, 1988 and 2003.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004.
- Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.



- SUGGESTIONS
- CREATE A CONCISE SOAR CHILD SAFETY BOOKLET AND ONLINE QUICK GLANCE RESOURCE FOR ALL SOAR STAFF AND FACILITATORS THAT MUST BE KNOWN BY HEART

5.6 Guide for all FAC's & FIT's – Child Welfare & Protection Concerns/Disclosures

Dealing with a disclosure

A child may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this. You must be knowledgeable of the appropriate procedure to deal with it, Soar's children and Youth Welfare & Protection Policy as well as Soar's Designated Liaison Person and his/her contact details as well as all the emergency contact information (see section 2.2)

01.) When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Tell the child or young person you believe them: Reassure him or her of your belief and support.
- Stay calm: Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way by listening to the child compassionately. Try to adjust your way of expression to his/her ability to understand and age.
- Listen to the child or young person: Allow the child or young person to take his/her time to tell you about the problem. Do not ask leading questions or specific details. Avoid making suggestions. Take what the child is saying seriously.
- Reassure him/her: Tell the child he/ she has done the right thing by telling you. Stress what is happening to him/her it is not his/her fault. Avoid showing any extreme reaction to what the child is saying or any judgement on the alleged abuser, have in mind it is often a close person. By doing so, the child could feel threatened and stop telling you.
- Be honest with the child: Tell the child that it is not possible to



keep that information a secret, and that you are trying to help him/her. Give him a general indication of what would happen next. Reassure the child by saying that you are there for him/her and want to help. **Let the child know who you will speak with i.e. the Child Protection Officer within the school and also the Designated Liaison Person in Soar.**

- Carefully record the details.
- Pass on this information to the Designated Liaison Person by phone followed by email asap.

The procedure is exactly the same if you have a Welfare issue or concern. All Child Protection concerns will be given to Tusla, Child & Family Agency by the Designated Liaison Person. Not all Welfare concerns will require this course of action, the Designated Liaison Person will speak with the school, young person, parent and or guardian and relevant support options/referrals will be advocated.



CONFIDENTIAL

RECORD of Child Welfare & Protection Concern/Disclosure

All Soar FAC's, FIT's and Staff/Crew involved in working with children who have concerns about a child but are not sure what to do, should discuss these with the Soar [Children First Designated Liaison Person, \(DSL\), Babs Leonard](#). Once you have discussed the issue/concern with the DSL please complete this form.

If a child is in danger outside office hours you can contact the [Gardai](#).

Under [The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998](#), so long as you report what you believe is true and it is done in good faith you cannot be sued.

Remember: If a person has opened up to you it is because they trust you. You can give the same comfort and support you would give to anyone in crisis, be it due to bereavement, an illness, or sexual abuse. Be aware that the person may find it difficult to talk, or may not always wish to talk. Try to be open and available without placing him or her under pressure. Reassure him or her of your belief and support.

The HSE National Counselling Service is in place to listen to, value and understand those who have been abused in childhood (see www.hse-ncs.ie/en). The service can be accessed either through healthcare professionals or by way of self-referral (Freephone 1800 477477).

Also, The Rape Crisis Centre 24-hour helpline is available nationally and is open for immediate help and support on 1800 77 88 88. By calling the helpline a meeting with a counsellor can be arranged.



Please return this form to the DSL Babs Leonard

Asap by email

Date of Report:

FIT's & FAC's in Workshop:

Details of Child

Name:

Address:

Male/Female:

DOB: Age:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT PHONE:

PREFERRED CONTACT TIME:

PARENT/GUARDIAN:

CONTACT PHONE:

PROGRAM NAME & LOCATION (School/Out of School):

DLP will follow up with Parent/Guardian as appropriate.

Please provide a full description of the concern/disclosure including the conversation with young person:

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN:



SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER AND OR RELEVANT PERSON TO REPORT CONCERN/DISCLOSURE TO WITHIN THE SCHOOL BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

NAME:

CONTACT NUMBER:

DLP WILL FOLLOW UP WITH THIS PERSON

FOLLOW UP REQUIRED (please be specific about what has been communicated to the young person):

Please inform the young person this information will be passed on to the Soar DLP and relevant support person within their school. Permission from young person to follow-up: Yes _____
No _____

Name of person completing this form:

Role at Soar:

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____