

Child Protection Policy - [Unscripted]

1. Policy Statement

Unscripted is committed to providing a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for all children and young people who participate in our programmes. We believe that every child has the right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect, and we are dedicated to safeguarding their welfare. This policy outlines our commitment and the procedures we will follow to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, guest artists, parents/guardians, and students involved in activities organized or run by Unscripted.

3. Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, but not at the expense of a child's safety.

4. Definitions

- **Child/Young Person:** For the purpose of this policy, a child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- **Abuse:** Harm or mistreatment of a child. This includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.
- **Safeguarding:** Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Unscripted is:

- **Name:** Karoline O'Sullivan
- **Role:** School Director
- **Contact Email:** karolineosullivan@gmail.com
- **Contact Phone:** 0852291695

The DSL is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for all staff and volunteers regarding child protection concerns.
- Liaising with external agencies (e.g., Tusla - Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána) as required.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate child protection training.
- Maintaining accurate and confidential records of all safeguarding concerns.
- Reviewing and updating this policy regularly.

6. Recruitment and Vetting

Unscripted is committed to safe recruitment practices. All staff and volunteers who work directly with children will undergo:

- **Garda Vetting (National Vetting Bureau Clearance):** Mandatory for all relevant positions.
- **Interviews:** To assess suitability and commitment to child safeguarding.
- **References:** At least two professional references will be sought.
- **Induction:** All new staff and volunteers will receive an induction that includes a thorough review of this Child Protection Policy and their safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Training

All staff and volunteers will receive regular child protection training, appropriate to their role, which will include:

- Understanding different types of abuse and neglect.
- Recognizing the signs and indicators of abuse.
- Knowing how to respond to a disclosure from a child.
- Understanding the reporting procedures outlined in this policy.
- Awareness of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children.

8. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers must adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

- Always act in the best interests of the child.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children and their families.
- Avoid situations that could be misinterpreted, such as being alone with a child in an unobserved area for extended periods.
- Use appropriate language and behavior at all times.
- Never use physical punishment or engage in any form of abusive behavior.
- Do not exchange personal contact details (phone numbers, social media) with students.
- Report any concerns about a child's welfare or any inappropriate behavior by another adult immediately to the DSL.

- Respect a child's privacy and dignity.
- Be a positive role model.

9. Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

9.1. If a Child Discloses Abuse:

- **Listen carefully:** Let the child speak without interruption or leading questions.
- **Take them seriously:** Reassure the child that they are brave for telling you.
- **Do not promise confidentiality:** Explain that you will need to tell someone to help them, but that you will only tell people who need to know.
- **Do not investigate:** It is not your role to investigate the allegations.
- **Do not make judgments or express shock.**
- **Record:** Make a written record as soon as possible, detailing:
 - What the child said (verbatim if possible).
 - Who was present.
 - Date and time of disclosure.
 - Any actions taken.
 - Your signature.
- **Report:** Immediately report the disclosure to the DSL.

9.2. If You Have Concerns About a Child (Observed Indicators/Information from Third Party):

- Record your observations and concerns, including dates, times, and specific details.
- Do not discuss your concerns with anyone other than the DSL.
- Report your concerns immediately to the DSL.

9.3. If an Allegation is Made Against a Staff Member or Volunteer:

- Any allegation against a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- If the allegation is against the DSL, it must be reported to The Community Centre Board.
- The individual against whom the allegation is made may be suspended from their duties, pending investigation, to ensure the safety of the children and the integrity of the investigation.
- External agencies (Tusla, An Garda Síochána) will be informed as appropriate and without delay.
- Confidentiality will be maintained where suitable, but the welfare of the child remains paramount.

10. Reporting Procedures

- All concerns and disclosures will be reported to the DSL.

- The DSL will assess the information and, in consultation with relevant external agencies (e.g., Tusla - Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána), determine the appropriate course of action.
- Referrals to Tusla or An Garda Síochána will be made if there are reasonable grounds to believe a child has been or is at risk of significant harm.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of concerns and actions taken, unless doing so would place the child at further risk of harm or prejudice an investigation.

11. Photography and Filming Policy

- Parents/guardians will be asked to provide consent for their child to be photographed or filmed during drama school activities for promotional, archival or educational purposes.
- Clear guidelines will be provided to parents/guardians and staff regarding appropriate use of cameras and mobile phones.
- No personal cameras or mobile phones are permitted in changing areas or toilets.
- When photographs are used, children will not be identified by their full names unless specific consent has been given.

12. Online Safety and Social Media

- Staff and volunteers are prohibited from communicating with students via personal social media accounts. All official communication will be through Unscripted's official channels (e.g., email, secure messaging platforms).
- The drama school will take appropriate action if made aware of online behavior that compromises the safety or well-being of its students.

13. Anti-Bullying Policy

- Unscripted has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying in any form (physical, verbal, emotional, cyberbullying).
- Students are encouraged to report any instances of bullying to staff members.
- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed promptly and effectively, in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

14. Medical Needs and First Aid

- Parents/guardians are required to provide comprehensive medical information and emergency contact details for their child upon enrollment.
- Accurate records of all incidents and first aid administered will be maintained.
- In emergencies, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If they cannot be reached, emergency medical services will be called.

15. Communication with Parents/Guardians

- This Child Protection Policy will be made available to all parents/guardians upon enrollment and on our website.

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to raise any concerns they have about their child's safety or welfare with the DSL.
- Clear communication channels will be maintained between the drama school and parents/guardians.

16. Review and Monitoring

- This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation or best practice.
- Records of reviews and any amendments will be maintained.
- The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through incident reviews and feedback and incident reviews.

17. Related Policies and Procedures

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy (GDPR Compliance)
- Complaints Procedure

18. External Contacts / Useful Resources

- **Tusla - Child and Family Agency:** [Tusla Website Link, e.g., www.tusla.ie] / [Tusla Contact Number]
- **An Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force):** Your local Garda station / Emergency: 999 or 112
- **Childline:** [Childline Website Link, e.g., www.childline.ie] / [Childline Contact Number, e.g., 1800 66 66 66]
- **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Ireland:** [NSPCC Website Link, e.g., www.nspcc.org.uk/ireland] / [NSPCC Contact Number, if applicable]

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding

I, Karoline O'Sullivan (School Director), acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Child Protection Policy of Unscripted.

Signature:



Printed Name: Karoline O'Sullivan

Date: 16th August 2025