



***Comhairle Chontae Laoise***  
***Laois County Council***

## **Child Safeguarding Statement**

### **1. Name of service being provided:**

Local Government Services in Co Laois

### **2. Nature of service**

Laois County Council, as the Local Government body for the County of Laois, provides an extensive range of services throughout the county. These include but are not limited to Planning, Housing, Environmental Services, Roads & Transportation, Fire Services, Economic Development, Library Services Playgrounds and parks and a range of community services.

### **3. Principles to safeguard children from harm**

Laois County Council is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in the delivery of all our services and activities. The Local Authority has an overall corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard the children accessing the Local Authority Services and Activities.

The Council is committed to;

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

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

### **Laois County Council's child-centred approach**

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

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

#### 4. Risk Assessment

In accordance with Tulsa's children First national Guidance 2017, Laois County Council have carried out an assessment of risk of any potential for harm and abuse to a child while availing of our services. A list of the areas of risk identified and the procedures for managing these risks is available upon request to Laois County Council.

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage Risk Identified</b>
1. Risk of not being fully compliant with Children First legislation, policy, procedure and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Development of Children First Implementation Plan</li><li>- Appoint Designated Liaison Person (OLP) and Deputy DLPs</li><li>- Development of a Child Safeguarding Statement</li></ul>
2. Risk to children in receipt of our service from a member of staff or volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Council's selection and recruitment policy is in line with the LGMA guidance and with the National Vetting Bureau guidance</li><li>- Implementing a Code of Behaviour to provide employees and volunteers with clear guidance on how to treat children and vulnerable adults</li><li>- Develop procedures to deal with an allegation of abuse made against an employee/volunteer</li></ul>
3. Risk of harm or concern not being recognised and reported by a member of staff or volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provide training to relevant staff</li><li>- Roll Out Awareness Programme to all staff</li></ul>

#### 5. Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and Tulsa's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

Laois County Council's Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service;
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children;
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;

- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

## 6. Reporting a Concern

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

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

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

If you require any further information on the Local Authority's Policies and Procedures, please contact;

**Dominic Reddin**, Child Protection Liaison Officer, [dreddin@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:dreddin@laoiscoco.ie)

and/or **Carmel McNicholl** Deputy Child Protection Liaison Officer, [cmcnicholl@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:cmcnicholl@laoiscoco.ie)

Or refer to our policy document:

*"Laois County Council's Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children"*

Further information on Child Protection – [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

## 7. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

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

Signed:

 14/11/19.  
**Mr. John Mulholland**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Laois County Council**