

Sirius Arts Centre Child Safeguarding Statement 2024

1. Name of service being provided:

- Activities for community youth groups and school children

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

The mission of Sirius Arts Centre, also known as SIRIUS, is to facilitate the production and presentation of, and public engagement with, art and knowledge, and offers professional development opportunities to artists through commissions and residencies.

SIRIUS is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. Through our mission, SIRIUS supports children and young people to participate in, benefit from and contribute to the different strands of our programming. We do this through:

- 1.** Facilitating opportunities for children and young people to contribute ideas and give feedback on our programmes
- 2.** Delivering workshops and activities specifically designed for and devised with children and young people
- 3.** Collaborative strategizing and programming with our partners and community stakeholders who support the promotion of youth voice and child-centred decision making such as parents, guardians and family members, advisory bodies and community service providers.

Activities are facilitated by SIRIUS' programme team and contracted professional artists, delivered both on-site at SIRIUS and off-site in community and educational settings. All facilitators and staff are required to read and sign the Child Protection Policy and where relevant, undergo Garda Vetting.

3. Risk assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage
1.	Risk of child being harmed by a member of staff or other person while participating in workshops or on work experience.	All SIRIUS personnel are provided with a copy of the studio's Child Safeguarding Statement. Safe recruitment procedures involve: Taking all reasonable steps to eliminate people who are not suitable for working with children; and insisting all staff and members working with children are Garda vetted. Provide training on our child safeguarding policy. All staff/facilitators to read and comply with Child Safeguarding policy and procedures. Children and young people never to be left alone with an adult in the building, two adult policy in place when children are in the galleries.
2.	Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly.	Staff and facilitators are aware of the role of the Mandated Person (Director), and receive training in child safeguarding concerns and levels of concern for reporting.
3.	Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of images of young people.	Images of any child or young person participating in activities or workshops organised by SIRIUS will not be used for any purposes without the consent of the parent/caregiver/guardian.
4.	Risk of harm due to bullying of a young person.	Our policy outlines what constitutes bullying and harassment, who to make a complaint to and what action the SIRIUS will take in dealing with an offence of this nature.
5.	Risk of harm not noted by SIRIUS Personnel: Board members, staff members, workshop facilitators.	Introduce all Board/staff to the SIRIUS Child Safeguarding Policy; roles, reporting procedures and codes of behaviour. Provision of child safeguarding training provided by SIRIUS as part of induction.

4. Procedures:

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

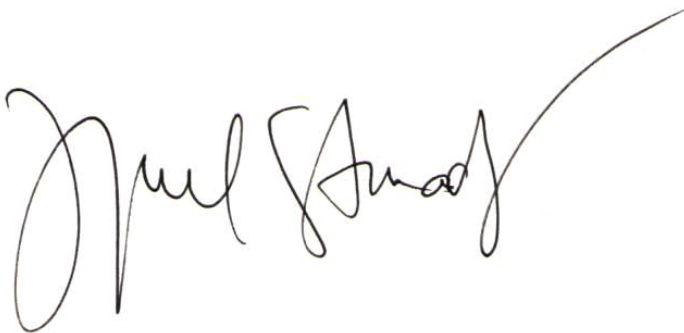
- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training 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.

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in November 2024 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miguel Amado', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Miguel Amado
Director, SIRIUS
Mandated Person under the Children First Act 2015.

Date: 9 January 2024

SIRIUS ARTS CENTRE

Child Protection Policy 2024

Review Date: 9 January 2024

Sirius Arts Centre Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Policy

1. Name of service being provided:

- Tours, workshops and activities for community youth groups and school children

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

The Sirius Arts Centre (SIRIUS) mission is to act: *as an intermediary between art and the public, by raising awareness of contemporary art through a challenging, multi-disciplinary programme. Sirius Arts Centre advocates for the importance and value of the arts and offers opportunities for participation and professional development for artists.*

SIRIUS is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. Through our mission, SIRIUS supports children and young people to participate in, benefit from and contribute to the different strands of our programming. We do this through:

5. Facilitating opportunities for children and young people to contribute ideas and give feedback on our programmes
6. Delivering workshops and activities specifically designed for and devised with children and young people
7. Collaborative strategizing and programming with our partners and community stakeholders who support the promotion of youth voice and child-centred decision making such as parents, guardians and family members, advisory bodies and community service providers.

Activities are facilitated by SIRIUS' programme team and contracted professional artists, delivered both on-site at SIRIUS and off-site in community and educational settings. All facilitators and staff are required to read and sign the Child Protection Policy and where relevant, undergo Garda Vetting.

3. Risk assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage
1.	Risk of child being harmed by a member of staff or other person while participating in workshops or on work experience.	All SIRIUS personnel are provided with a copy of the studio's Child Safeguarding Statement. Safe recruitment procedures involve: Taking all reasonable steps to eliminate people who are not suitable for working with children; and insisting all staff and members working with children are Garda vetted. Provide training on our child safeguarding policy. All staff/facilitators to read and comply with Child Safeguarding policy and procedures. Children and young people never to be left alone with an adult in the building, two adult policy in place when children are in the galleries.
2.	Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly.	Staff and facilitators are aware of the role of the Mandated Person (Director), and receive training in child safeguarding concerns and levels of concern for reporting.

3.	Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of images of young people.	Images of any child or young person participating in activities or workshops organised by SIRIUS will not be used for any purposes without the consent of the parent/caregiver/guardian.
4.	Risk of harm due to bullying of a young person.	Our policy outlines what constitutes bullying and harassment, who to make a complaint to and what action the SIRIUS will take in dealing with an offence of this nature.
5.	Risk of harm not noted by SIRIUS Personnel: Board members, staff members, workshop facilitators.	Introduce all Board/staff to the SIRIUS Child Safeguarding Policy; roles, reporting procedures and codes of behaviour. Provision of child safeguarding training provided by SIRIUS as part of induction.

4. Procedures:

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

- 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

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and Policy and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement and Policy will be reviewed in November 2024 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: Date:

Miguel Amado

Director, SIRIUS

Mandated Person under the Children First Act 2015.

miguel@siriusartscentre.ie

Child Protection Policy Procedures

- 1. Code of behaviour for staff**
- 2. Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse**
- 3. Confidentiality**
- 4. Recruitment and selecting staff**
- 5. Managing and supervising staff**
- 6. Involvement of primary carers**
- 7. Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff**
- 8. Complaints and comments**
- 9. Incidents and accidents**

1. Code of behaviour for staff

Child-centered approach:

- Treat all children and young people equally
- Listen to and respect children and young people
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Treat all children and young people as individuals
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session
- Encourage feedback from group
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
- Lead by example
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation

Good practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact)

- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures
- Organisations should have an anti-bullying policy. Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy. (For further information on anti-bullying policy see 'Our Duty to Care', Fact sheet 2, Department of Health and Children, 2002)
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers
- Report and record any incidents and accidents
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved observe appropriate gender balance for residentialials
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations have guidelines and a prompt sheet for artists
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing'
- Don't let a problem get out of control
- Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of primary carers
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner

Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.
- Physical contact
- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation)
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises

Health and safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised
- Manage any dangerous materials
- Provide a safe environment
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly

2. Reporting procedures

The Director has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

The Director can be contacted at (insert phone number) and miguel@siriusartscentre.ie

The Operations Officer has been designated as deputy to the Director and can be contacted at megan@siriusartscentre.ie 0868649980.

Grounds for Concern

The following excerpt from *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (4.3.2 - p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- i. *specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;*
- ii. *an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;*
- iii. *evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;*
- iv. *an injury or behaviour which 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 [an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour];*
- v. *consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.*

Recording procedures

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

- Suspicions
- Concerns
- Worrying observations
- Behavioural changes
- Actions and outcomes.

Dealing with a disclosure:

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

Reporting procedures:

- Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts. Information recorded should be factual and any opinions should be supported by facts
- Inform the Designated Person or the deputy, if unavailable.
- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly.
- In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/ young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí

3. Confidentiality Statement

We at SIRIUS are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances)
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/ young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

4. Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary)
- Posts will be advertised widely
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form

- At least two written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary
- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed

Some of the exclusions would include:

- any child-related convictions
- refusal to sign application form and declaration form
- insufficient documentary evidence of identification
- concealing information on one's suitability to working with children

There will be a relevant probationary period of six weeks

All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought.

5. Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that:

New staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern
- Undergo a probationary or trial period

All staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement
- Be provided with child protection training.

6. Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers. We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant
- Comply with health and safety practices
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centered organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

7. Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person, the Programme and Operations Manager will deal with issues related to the child/young person.

2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made the Director will deal with issues related to the staff member.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk

- If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted
- The reporting procedures outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines should be followed
- Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken
- The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner
- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation
- the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond
- The chair of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí
- After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

8. In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within five weeks;
- The Director has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

9. Accidents procedure

- The organisation must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organization
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file
- External organisations with whom your organisation has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance
- First-aid boxes should be available and regularly re-stocked
- The location of the first-aid box(es) must be made known to staff
- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff
- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off- site trips

END OF DOCUMENT