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CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



CDI Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

September 2019

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This document should be read in conjunction with the following CDI documents:-

- Employee Handbook;
- Board Handbook;
- Health and Safety Statement and Risk Assessment;
- Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour for Working with Children/Young People;
- Finance Procedures.

1. Guiding Principles

1.1 Introduction: Beliefs, values and codes of CDI

CDI is funded under the Government's Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC), which builds on the learning to date from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programmes (PEIP). The ABC programme aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. The programme has a particular emphasis on improving health, educational and social outcomes for children and young people, and on improving the effectiveness of existing services for them.

Based in Tallaght West, CDI is the result of the professionalism, passion and persistence of a consortium of 23 concerned individuals and organisations in the community, who had a vision of a better place for children. Through innovative partnerships, they brought together the science of evidenced-based practice and rigorous evaluation, with the spirit of an approach focused on the identified needs of children and families.

CDI was initially established through a partnership between the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP), under the PEIP, which was set up with "the objective of testing innovative ways of delivering services and early interventions for children and young people, including the wider family and community settings," (DCYA, 2011).

CDI designs, delivers and evaluates a suite of programmes across a spectrum of local needs including language, literacy, health, early years, conflict management and community safety. All CDI programmes are evidence-informed and manualised, and are delivered through existing structures and services. CDI is committed to promoting and facilitating the full participation of children and young people in our work. We aim to create a safe and healthy environment for the young people with whom we work and are committed at all times to ensuring their safety and welfare.

In accordance with good practice, all organisations which have contact with children and young people should introduce a child protection policy. CDI has developed this Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures document which also helps to provide safeguards and support for staff when they are working with children and young people.

1.2 Commitment to compliance with national legislation and policy

CDI is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all the children and young people with whom we work. Our Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are in accordance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. CDI is committed to promoting the rights of the child including the inclusion of children and young people in matters that affect them. Our priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who accesses our services. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person, who attends our services, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.

The objectives of this document are:

- To guide and assist the CDI Board and employees in understanding the CDI Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- To ensure that the policies and procedures developed are in line with the following National Guidelines:
 - Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017.
 - ¹Our Duty to Care, Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People, Department of Health & Children, 2002.
 - ²Department of Education, Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2013.
- To ensure that the policies and procedures are actively implemented;
- To ensure that the policy is updated and reviewed in line with government, national and organisational developments;
- To ensure that all those required to adhere to these policies are fully informed of them.

1.3 Who these guiding principles are for:

These policies and procedures must be observed and accepted by all those

- a. on the Board of CDI;
- b. employed directly by CDI;
- c. working with the organisation on a voluntary basis (e.g. advising students on placement);
- d. with Governance responsibility for CDI.

¹ *Our Duty to Care* was published by the Department of Health and Children in October 2002. It offers a practical guide to staff and volunteers who work with children by outlining a number of fundamental principles of good practice.

² Department of Education and Skills, (2013) *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, Government Publications, 2013. <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf>

Declaration of Guiding Principles

Name of organisation: **Childhood Development Initiative.**

We directly provide the following services/activities to children and young people: **Speech and Language services and Restorative Practices training.**

Our organisation believes that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are paramount. Our guiding principles are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children; Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and legislation such as the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.

Our guiding principles apply to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee/board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

We will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

2. Key personnel in safeguarding

All organisations that provide services to children should develop specific policies and procedures on how to create a safe environment. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) at CDI will maintain responsibility as Relevant Person for CDI in the development and review of the policies and procedures consistent with the Children First Child Safeguarding Best Practice Guide. CDI has appointed the following named people to support adherence to the Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures:

Our Designated Liaison Person is: **Emma Reilly (ATTI Coordinator)**

Contact details: emma@cdi.ie / tel: 01 4147362

Our Deputy Designated Liaison Person is: **Marian Quinn (CEO)**

Contact details: marian@cdi.ie / tel: 01 4147367

2.1 Designated Liaison Persons

The DLP in CDI has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the child protection and welfare policy of CDI is promoted and implemented. The Deputy DLP for CDI will take over the responsibilities of the DLP if they are unavailable for a significant amount of time.

The role of the DLP/Deputy DLP involves the following duties:

- To be familiar with “Children First”, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and “Our Duty to Care”, the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people, and to have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of CDI;
- To be fully familiar with CDI’s duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and have good knowledge of CDI’s guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures;
- To receive child protection and welfare concerns from stakeholders and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist; consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary; make a formal referral to Tusla where appropriate and provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate;
- Where appropriate, make a joint formal report of a child protection or welfare concern with the Mandated Person to Tusla on behalf of CDI using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form;
- Inform the child’s parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána unless:
 - informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child or young person;
 - informing the parents/guardians may place the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
 - the family’s knowledge of the report could impair Tusla’s ability to carry out an assessment;
- To build a working relationship with Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other agencies, as appropriate;
- To ensure that training is provided for all new and existing staff in CDI on the child protection policy;
- To ensure that supports are put in place for the young person, employees or volunteers in cases of allegations being made;
- To keep up to date and undertake relevant training on child protection policy and practice, in order to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of CDI’s policy and procedures in this area;
- To review CDI’s policy and procedures on child protection every year and amend as appropriate;
- To ensure that secure systems are in place for recording and retaining all confidential and relevant documentation in relation to child protection issues.

2.2 Mandated Persons

Mandated Persons at CDI have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015:

- To report harm to children, above a defined threshold, to Tusla;
- To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

Mandated Persons, under the legislation are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

The reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 apply only to information that a Mandated Person received or became aware of since the Act came into force. However, if there is a reasonable concern about past abuse, where the information came to the attention of a Mandated Person before the Act and there is possible continuing risk to children, it should be reported to Tusla under the Children First Guidance 2017.

Mandated Persons

Under the Children First Act 2015, certain classes of professionals are designated as Mandated Persons who have a statutory duty to report any child protection concerns which meet or exceed the threshold for reporting under the legislation. At CDI the Speech and Language Therapist, and Restorative Practice Trainers who have direct contact with children and young people in their services are the named Mandated Persons.

Where a Mandated Person has a concern, they should consider whether it meets reasonable grounds for concern. If the Mandated Person thinks the concern does meet reasonable grounds for concern, they should report the concern to their DLP. Where the concern reaches the threshold for a mandated report, the statutory obligation of the Mandated Persons to report under the Children First Act 2015 must be discharged by the Mandated Person and cannot be discharged by the DLP on their behalf.

Mandated persons can make a joint mandated report with their DLP or another person, mandated or otherwise. The Mandated Person retains their right to report independently, should the DLP choose not to report the concern. The provisions within the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 would apply in this circumstance (they are protected in law from civil liability or penalisation by their employer, if the report is made reasonably and in good faith). If reporting independent of CDI's DLP, the Mandated Persons should inform the DLP that a report under the Children First Act 2015 has been made.

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/what-are-the-thresholds-for-making-a-mandated-report/>

Further information on the role of Mandated Persons in responding to concerns can be found in

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/>

Mandated Persons at CDI:

Alice Coghlan (Speech and Language Therapist)

Childhood Development Initiative Ltd
Russell Centre
Level 4 Tallaght Cross
Tallaght
Dublin 24
Email: alice@cdi.ie

Michelle Quinn (Senior Speech and Language Therapist)

C/o Knockmore Junior School,
Killinarden,

Tallaght
Dublin 24
Email: michelle@cdi.ie

Alison Butler (Speech and Language Therapist)

C/o Knockmore Junior School,
Killinarden,
Tallaght Dublin 24

Email: alison@cdi.ie

3. Responding to and reporting of child protection or welfare concerns

3.1 Procedures for reporting child protection or welfare concerns

CDI has put in place a standard reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures concerns or allegations of child abuse to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount.

Reporting forms can be found

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.pdf

3.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All workers and volunteers at CDI (including Board members and students on placement or work experience) have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and to report any concerns they may have for the protection or welfare of a child/young person.

Within CDI the role of the DLP and Deputy DLP is to receive child protection and welfare concerns from workers/volunteers and to report concerns which meet the threshold of 'reasonable grounds for concern' to Tusla.

Within CDI the role of the Mandated Persons is to fulfil their statutory obligation to report concerns which reach or exceed the legally defined thresholds within Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015 and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

If any welfare or safeguarding concerns relate to the Mandated Persons or DLP, then reports will be made to the CEO and/or Chairperson of the Board for CDI.

3.1.2 Identifying reasonable grounds for concern

The statutory authorities should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indicator of abuse or neglect would not constitute reasonable grounds of or for concern.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children lists the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way;
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse;
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect;
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused;
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed;
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused.

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the individual must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the young person and that no young person is ever left in an un-safe situation.

Wherever appropriate, Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child. (See section 2.1 for other reasons not to inform parents/guardians).

Under no circumstances should any individual member of staff or volunteer or the organisation itself attempt to deal with the problem of child abuse alone.

3.1.3 Categories and indicators of abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

1. Neglect
2. Emotional abuse
3. Physical abuse
4. Sexual abuse

Abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person; sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Definitions of the four types of abuse and how to recognise abuse are found

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/definitions-of-child-abuse/>

which are based on 'Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'.

3.1.4 Responding to a disclosure of abuse

CDI values and encourages the full participation of children and young people in many aspects of our work and we strive to ensure that the experience of the child/young person in our work is a happy and productive one. In the event of a child/young person disclosing an incident of abuse or neglect, it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member/volunteer involved.

The following are guidelines to support the worker/volunteer in this:

- React calmly;
- Listen carefully and attentively;
- Take the young person seriously;

- Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. You should neither investigate nor try to validate the allegation. Leading questions and suggestions could complicate an official investigation;
- Be aware that disclosures are very difficult for the child;
- Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time;
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to tell. Do not pressurise the child. Allow him/her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language;
- Do not show signs of disgust, anger or disbelief;
- Assure the child that you believe them; false disclosures are very rare in young children;
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged perpetrator, while also disliking what was done to him/her. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator while talking with the child;
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him/her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what he/she has disclosed;
- Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures which will follow;
- Pass the information to the DPL; do not attempt to deal with the problem alone;
- Treat the information confidentially;
- Tell the child that:
 - You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you;
 - There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further ongoing hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything there and then;
 - However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time;
 - Don't make promises which you cannot keep.
- At the earliest possible opportunity:
Record in writing what the child has said, including as far as possible, the exact words used by the child. Date and sign the document inform your DLP immediately and agree measures to protect the child. Whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality, the DLP will inform Tusla or the Gardaí, as appropriate.

3.1.5 Retrospective Disclosures

When an adult makes a disclosure of childhood abuse to CDI staff (paid and unpaid), it is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the adult's disclosure. If any risk is deemed

to exist, this information must be shared with Tusla and An Garda Síochána via the DLP. It is essential that all relevant information is carefully collated. The DLP will ensure that the information is provided appropriately and also that internal records are completed. The retrospective disclosure reporting form can be found [here](#). Consideration should be given to supporting the person who has made the disclosure to access counselling and other supports.

3.1.6 Reporting concerns, disclosures, or allegations of abuse

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be experiencing abuse or have been abused in the past. This is an important responsibility for staff and volunteers when working with children and young people. Regardless of how a concern comes to a worker/volunteers attention, it must be reported to the DLP.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse are summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority;
- Where a formal report is deemed appropriate, this should be made without delay to Tusla.

The reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse is as follows:

- The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse should bring it to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) immediately, irrespective of whether a formal report is made to Tusla.
- The DLP will assess and review the information that has been provided. The DLP may contact the Tusla Duty Social Worker for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.
- After consultation with Tusla officials, the DLP will then take one of two options:
 1. Formally report the allegation, concern or disclosure to Tusla, or
 2. Not make a formal report to Tusla but keep a record of the concerns on file. The reasons for not reporting the allegation, concern or disclosure will be clearly recorded. The employee/volunteer who made the initial report will be informed if a formal report is not being made to Tusla and it is open to him/her to make a formal report, directly to the relevant authority if they feel this is necessary.
- Where a formal report is made, Tusla will decide whether or not to liaise with An Garda Síochána. It is likely that Tusla will want to speak to the person who first made the report to clarify facts and the circumstances of the report.

In an emergency and/or out of hours, a report should be made directly to An Garda Síochána.

3.1.7 Information sharing and record keeping

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 do not prevent the sharing of information on a reasonable and proportionate basis for the purposes of child protection. Tusla has the authority to share information concerning a child who is the subject of a risk assessment with a Mandated Person who has been asked to provide assistance. Tusla must only share what is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case. Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 makes it an offence for anyone to disclose information to a third party which has been shared by Tusla during the course of an assessment, unless Tusla has provided written authorisation to do so. Failure to comply with this section can render you liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to six months or both. This offence can also be applied to an organisation.

The following procedures should be adhered to:

- Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- CDI cooperates in the sharing of information and/or records with Tusla where a child protection or welfare issue arises, on a need to know basis in the best interests of the child/young person.
- The CDI DLP's have access to Child Protection records, and these records are only used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Child Protection records will be kept securely on file in line with Section 4.5 of CDI's [Records Retention Policy](#), taking into account legislative principles such as Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.
- Child protection records at CDI are updated as required and reviewed regularly by the DLP.

3.2 Responding to allegations of abuse made against workers/volunteers

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee, volunteer or Board members of CDI, there are two procedures that CDI will follow:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child (*see section 3.1.5*);
- The procedure for dealing with the employee.

In the case of the allegation being against an employee of CDI, the same person will not deal with both the young person and the alleged abuser. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately. The DLP will follow the normal reporting procedure in CDI. It will be the responsibility of the CEO of CDI to deal with a staff member against whom an allegation has been made.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to a member of the Board, a sub-group of the Board will be appointed and will deal with all aspects relating to the Board member.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the CEO, the Chair of the Board of Directors will deal with all aspects relating to the CEO.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the DLP, the Chair of the Board of Directors will deal with all aspects of the case, including the reporting procedure.

If an allegation is made against an employee of CDI the following steps will be taken:

- The CEO of CDI will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the employee;
- The allegation will be assessed by the DLP to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities at this point. The DLP may wish to contact Tusla for advice on the issue;
- The safety of the child is the first priority of CDI and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child is safe. The actions taken will be proportionate to the level of risk;
- The measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following: suspension of duties of the person accused; re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children/young people; working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation, or other measures as deemed appropriate;
- CDI will seek to ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period within the context of due process, and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/carers as appropriate;
- If a formal report is being made to Tusla the CEO (or the Chair of the Board) will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained, to be passed onto Tusla when a formal report is made;
- CDI will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise;
- CDI will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and Tusla and any decisions on action to be taken in regard to the employee will be taken in consultation with these agencies;
- The person against whom the allegation is made may need support during this period and CDI will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.

In the case of an allegation being made against a volunteer within CDI the DLP will deal with the issue as outlined in the steps above.

4. Working safely with children and young people

4.1 Staff recruitment policy statement

CDI is committed to putting in place good procedures in recruitment and training as a central element in ensuring the safety and welfare of all adults and young people involved in the organisation. These are outlined in CDI's Employee Handbook.

4.2 Staff Training Policy Statement

All staff of CDI will be expected to participate in relevant training from time to time. Those working directly with children/young people must complete the on line Tusla Training

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/> prior to undertaking any work with children.

4.3 Young Volunteers

Where young people under 18 years are assisting in the work of CDI, they will receive appropriate information on the CDI Child Protection Policy and national child protection policy at a level suitable to their age and experience. These young people will always work in partnership with or under the supervision of an adult.

5 Bullying

5.1 Bullying definition and policy

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others.

Examples of bullying include:

- Teasing
- Taunting
- Threatening
- Hitting
- Extorting
- Exclusion.

CDI will not tolerate any bullying behaviour by children/young people or adults and will deal with any incidents immediately in accordance with this policy. This policy covers:

- Children/young people bullying other children/young people;
- Adults bullying children/young people;
- Children/young people bullying adults.

Adults bullying adults should be dealt with using the complaints process outlined in the CDI Employee Handbook.

- **5.2 Underpinning Principles** All children/young people and adults who participate in activities will be treated with dignity and respect by adults and by other children/young people and will not be subject to bullying.
- All children/young people and adults who participate in CDI activities have a responsibility to treat other children/young people and adults with dignity and respect and refrain from bullying behaviour.
- It will be made clear to all children/young people and adults participating in CDI events/activities that bullying is not acceptable and that others should be treated with dignity and respect.
- There will be adequate supervision by CDI or other staff/volunteers at all events/activities involving children/young people. This will help to prevent bullying.
- CDI or other staff/volunteers will monitor all events/activities run by CDI involving children/young people to ensure that no bullying is taking place.
- Any incident or suspicion of bullying will be dealt with using the procedure outlined below.
- If a child/young person witnesses bullying or suspects that bullying is taking place, he/she should report it to CDI staff/volunteer, who will follow the procedure outlined below.
- If a child/young person is the victim of bullying he/she should report it to CDI staff/volunteer who will follow the procedure outlined below.

5.3 Procedures

Procedure for dealing with bullying:

- All reports of bullying will be recorded, investigated and dealt with by an appropriate CDI staff member.
- CDI staff receiving the complaint or witnessing the bullying will consult with the CEO or a Board member to decide who is the most appropriate person to follow up on the complaint.
- The staff member dealing with the complaint will keep a record of the alleged bullying incident/s and the investigation and action taken.
- The staff member dealing with the complaint will speak separately to all involved in order to get all sides of the story. The staff member should also speak to others who may have witnessed the incident/s, if appropriate. The staff member will interview all involved in a calm manner and will seek answers to what, where, when, who and why.
- If the victim of the alleged bullying is a child, their parent/guardian will be informed of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.
- If the perpetrator of the alleged bullying is a child their parent/guardian will be informed of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.
- If the perpetrator of the alleged bullying is a member of staff in CDI (paid or unpaid), the CEO of CDI or an appropriate Board member will be informed of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.
- If the staff member dealing with the complaint concludes that bullying has not taken place, the following action will be taken:
 - The complainant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator/s will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the reasons why it was concluded that bullying did not take place;
 - Support will be given to the complainant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator/s if necessary;
 - A restorative meeting will be arranged between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator with an agreed facilitator to discuss the issues involved if both are agreeable and it is deemed appropriate.
- If the staff member dealing with the complaint concludes that bullying has taken place, the following action will be taken:
 - The complainant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator/s will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the reasons why it was concluded that bullying took place;
 - Support will be given to the victim;
 - A restorative meeting will be arranged between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator to discuss the issues involved if both are agreeable and it is deemed appropriate;
 - A meeting will be held with the perpetrator to discuss the bullying behaviour. He/she will be informed of the disciplinary action to be taken as a result of this bullying behaviour.

5.4 Disciplinary Action

When the inquiry into the alleged bullying incident has taken place and it has been concluded that bullying occurred, it will be necessary to take some disciplinary action against the perpetrator of the

bullying. The disciplinary action should be agreed between the CEO and at least one member of the Board and should be appropriate to the seriousness of the incident/s. If the perpetrator of the bullying is a child/young person, the parent/guardian of the child/young person and the child/young person will be informed of the disciplinary action which will be taken. If the perpetrator of the bullying is an adult the following people will be informed of the disciplinary action which will be taken:

- The relevant Board member;
- The director of the organisation which the adult works for (if relevant), and
- The perpetrator.

The options for disciplinary action include:

- ❖ For serious incidents involving children/young people, dealing with the situation restoratively is optimal. In the absence of having an adult with restorative practices training there may be no alternative to sending the child/young person home and/or not allowing them to participate in any further CDI events/activities;
- ❖ For less serious incidents involving children/young people, a restorative process should be used allowing the child/young person to continue to participate in the event/activity once they have realised the impact to the victim and stated that they will not engage in any further bullying behaviour. There should also be agreement on how their behaviour will be closely monitored;
- ❖ Support will be provided to the child/young person to help them to understand that their behaviour is not acceptable and how their behaviour impacts on their ability to partake in the CDI programme;
- ❖ For serious incidents involving staff or volunteers of CDI, transferring the person out of CDI or transferring them to an area within CDI where they will not have any dealings with children/young people will be considered. (All actions taken in relation to CDI staff will be in accordance with the Civil Service guidelines on harassment, sexual harassment and bullying and relevant employment law). For offences involving staff/volunteers from other organisations, informing their parent organisation of the offence and not working with that staff member or volunteer again.

6. Complaints procedure in relation to child safety and protection

CDI is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children/young people with whom we work.

6.1 Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the HSE or An Garda Síochána. This means that even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded a plaintiff taking an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

Section 3 (1) of the Act states:

“3. (I) A person who apart from this section, would be so liable shall not be liable in damages in respect of the communication, whether in writing or otherwise, by him or her to an appropriate person of his or her opinion that-

- (a) A child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or
- (b) A child’s health development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected,

Unless it is proven that he or she has not acted reasonably and in good faith in forming that opinion and communicating it to the appropriate person”.

This protection applies to organisations and to individuals. It is considered therefore that organisations should assume full responsibility for reporting suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities. Reports to the Tusla and to the Gardaí should be made by the DLP, as above.

Complaints by CDI staff (paid or unpaid) will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the CDI Employee Handbook.

6.2 Complaints by Children, Young People and/or their Carer

We also try to ensure that children/young people have a positive and enjoyable experience when working with CDI.

This complaints procedure aims to cover any situation which may arise when children/young people or their parents/guardians are not happy with the way the children/young people were treated while they were in CDI, working with CDI or at an event/activity run by CDI or another organisation on behalf of CDI.

6.2.1 Who can make a complaint?

Complaints can be made by:

- Children/young people involved with CDI;
- Their parents/guardians;
- Other advocates on behalf of children/young people.

6.2.2 How to make a complaint

1. If the complaint is in relation to the safety and welfare of children/young people the complaint should be made to the DLP in CDI.
2. Other complaints should be made to the person with whom the child/young person dealt with. If you prefer, you can make this complaint to the CEO in CDI.

6.2.3 Information you need to provide:

Complaints can be made orally or in writing. By providing the following information you can help to speed up the investigation of your complaint:

- The name and address of the child/young person affected and the project/activity which they were involved in;
- If the complaint is being made by a parent/guardian or other adult, the name and address of the parent/guardian or other adult;
- Exactly what you are dissatisfied with;
- The name of the CDI staff member or volunteer who dealt with you;
- If your complaint is complicated, you may find it best to put it in writing so that no important detail is overlooked. Remember to send CDI copies of all documentation/correspondence that you may have;
- If you have special needs that may affect your ability to make a complaint, please let us know at the earliest opportunity. We will make every effort to assist you. info@cdi.ie

6.2.4 Our standards for dealing with complaints

- If the complaint relates to the safety and welfare of a child/young person, it will be examined in accordance with good practice in relation to the safety and welfare of children/young people;
- We will treat your complaint properly, fairly and impartially and in the best interests of the child/young person;
- We promise that making a complaint will have no implications for your dealings with CDI;
- An official other than those originally involved will examine your complaint;
- We will examine and review your complaint and send a reply to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint. Where it is not possible to meet this target, we will inform you and continue to do so until the matter is resolved;
- We will apologise for any mistreatment of the child/young person, explain what happened and put it right wherever possible;
- We will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in future.

6.2.5 Can you appeal?

If you are unhappy about the outcome of the review you can appeal the matter to the CEO of CDI within a month of the review.

7. Keeping children and young people safe from harm online

It is important that we acknowledge the central role of the internet in all of our lives and that we support children and young people to take advantage of all the unprecedented opportunities to learn, discover, create and communicate that new technologies provide. Although we do not directly use the internet in our programme delivery (namely Chit Chat and Restorative Practices), we may suggest apps, websites or other platforms that parent can use to help enhance the content of those programmes. Where this happens it is best practice to advise parents to ensure that:

- They have parental settings on devices that their children will use and have the appropriate settings for young children installed.

- That any apps should be supervised by the parent/carer whilst in use.
- Parents can get more information and guidance on internet safety at either of the following:- www.webwise.ie or www.cybersafeireland.org