

Cairdeas na bhFidléirí

Child Protection Policy

1 Preamble

Cairdeas na bhFidléirí is a Company Limited by Guarantee (Co. Reg. No. 634939) working mainly through voluntarism and dedicated to the promotion and development of traditional Donegal fiddle playing. The organisation is firmly committed to education as the primary means of achieving its aim. As such members of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí and persons acting officially on the groups behalf will regularly come into contact with children in both teaching and performance capacities.

Cairdeas na bhFidléirí is absolutely committed to the protection and safety of all children who participate in activities organised and delivered by the organisation.

This Policy statement is framed in order to establish an appropriate and effective system for dealing with the safety and protection of children participating in Cairdeas na bhFidléirí events. It has taken into account the objectives outlined in *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*. This Policy statement has the full support of the Board of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí.

The Board of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí acknowledges that abuse can manifest itself in four main manners, namely neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. The Board of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí acknowledges in the following manner:

Neglect can be defined 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, medical care etc. ... The threshold of

significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well being and / or development are severely affected.

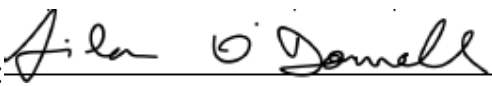
2 Child Protection Policy Statement

We, the Board of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí, is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child / young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

- A Code of Behaviour for all members
- Reporting of all suspected or disclosed abuse
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selection of members and persons acting on the organisation's behalf
- Management and supervision of members and persons acting on the organisation's behalf
- All allegations of misconduct or abuse by members and persons acting on the organisation's behalf
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

This policy was adopted by the then Committee of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí at its AGM in Glenties, County Donegal on October 7th, 2006 and has subsequently been reviewed on four occasions and agreed by the Board of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí CLG at its AGM on August 6th, 2024.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí at its AGM in Glencolmcille, County Donegal each year.

Signed:  Aidan O'Donnell,
(Cathaoirleach)
Date: August 6th, 2024

3 Code of Behaviour

All members of Cairdeas na bhFidlíirí and persons acting officially on the organisation's behalf will be committed to:

- 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 (both body language, including physical gestures, 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 and young person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate with children and young people and their primary carers;
- Agree a group "contract" before beginning group work;
- Encourage feedback from the 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, classes, master classes or other activities, e.g., school commitments or exams etc.;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations e.g. due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust built on genuine trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.
- Register each child / young person (i.e. name address, special requirements, emergency contact)
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures
- Encourage children and young people to report bullying, concerns or worries
- Observe appropriate behaviour
- Report and record all incidents and accidents

- 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
- 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 the teaching session must take place in an open, publicly accessible venue with the full knowledge and consent of the primary carer
- Avoid, if at all possible, giving a lift to a child / young person. If you must, ensure that the primary carer is informed and agrees with the arrangement in advance
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/ young people
- Do not use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical / verbal language
- Don't single out a particular child / young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus of attention
- Never allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any for,
- Never hit or physically chastise children / young people
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children / young people
- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised

4 Reasonable Grounds for Concern and Reporting Procedures

Reasonable Grounds for Concern include:

- Evidence of injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse which is unlikely to have been caused in another manner
- Any evidence or concern regarding sexual abuse
- Evidence or concern indicating the child has been exposed to physical or emotional neglect
- Any statement from a child indicating they have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused
- An admission from an adult that they have physically, emotionally or sexually abused a child to any degree
- Evidence provided by a third party that they witnessed a form of abuse

The Designated Person for routinely scheduled Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí events are as follows:

The Glencolmcille Summer School – Caoimhin Mac Aoidh
Weekend Workshops / Master Classes – Caoimhin Mac Aoidh / Rab Cherry (contingent on attendance of one or both)
The Glenties Annual Fiddlers Meeting – Caoimhín Mac Aoidh

Designated Deputy for these events are as follows:

The Glencolmcille Summer School – Rab Cherry
Weekend Master Classes – Tara Connaghan
The Glenties Annual Fiddlers Meeting – Rab Cherry

Other events will arise on a once off basis. The Designated Person, must be a Board Director, for these events and will clearly identify themselves to relevant teachers / assistants at the beginning of the event.

The Designated Person, or in their temporary absence, the Deputy Designated Person must be contacted as soon as possible 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 the relevant procedures are followed in a prompt manner without exception.

The Designated Person may choose to contact the Health Service Executive at the address below, if in the opinion of the Designated Person there are reasonable grounds for concern:

HSE
Community Services
Garden Centre
St. Conal's Hospital
Letterkenny
Co. Donegal
(074) 912-3739

Tusla
Level 2,
Justice Walsh Road,
Letterkenny,

Co. Donegal
Tel: (074) 919-7325

Should a child appear to be in immediate danger of abuse or threats of abuse, the Designated Person should immediately contact the nearest Garda Station.

Recognising abuse can at times be difficult, however four main forms are generally apparent. These are neglect (e.g. lack of adequate care), emotional abuse (e.g. lack of comfort and emotional attachment), physical abuse (e.g. signs of intentional injury) and sexual abuse (e.g. inappropriate age awareness of sexual practice, physical injury or emotional unease regarding sexuality).

In the event of a retrospective disclosure made by an adult regarding an earlier experience, the Designated Person must report the allegation in keeping with the process outlined in this policy statement.

5 Recording Procedures

In the event of an incident it is the duty of the Designated Person, or their Deputy dealing with the incident to record in writing all reported suspicions, concerns, observations, behavioural changes etc. which relate to the report. This written account is to be maintained for any future enquiry by the Designated Person and must be kept securely in accordance with the best practice in terms of confidentiality.

When recording an account provided by a child / young person, the recorder should stay calm, listen attentively and sincerely to the child / young person providing them with ample time to say what they need to say. Do not use leading questions or prompt details. Use simple, clear language. Reassure the person, however do not promise to keep any secrets. Explain to each child / young person what will happen next in procedural terms.

6 Recruiting Teachers

Cairdeas na bhFidléirí does not employ staff or avail of voluntary staff. It does hire persons for teaching purposes at its various events. In selecting teachers 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 are clearly defined for every job, both paid and voluntary
- We will always endeavour to select the most suitably qualified candidates
- Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two (or more) Board Members
- Persons who would be deemed to constitute any form of a potential or known “risk” will never be employed (either in a paid or voluntary capacity) by the organisation
- All teachers will undergo a relevant probationary period without exception
- Persons who have not served a suitable probationary period will not be retained nor will they be re-employed at any future time
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought

7 Managing and Supervising Teachers

In order to protect both teachers and children / young persons, the Board of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí undertake that:

- All persons authorised to act on behalf of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí will be made aware of the organisation’s code of conduct, child protection procedures and identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern
- Undergo a probationary period
- All persons authorised to act on behalf of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí will receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices
- All persons authorised to act on behalf of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí will be expected to have read and signed the child protection policy

8 Interaction with Primary Carers

Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí is committed to being open with all primary carers. To this aim we undertake to:

- Advise carers of our Child Protection Policy

- Comply with Health and Safety Standards
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice as outlined herein
- Adhere to our Recruitment guidelines
- Ensure as far as possible that our activities are age-appropriate
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parents, carers, or responsible adults whenever possible

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

- Respond promptly to the needs of the child / 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 case of a complaint against a Committee member or any person active in an authorised capacity for Cairdeas na bhFidléirí, the committee will immediately ensure the safety of the child / young person and inform primary carers in keeping with the provisions of this policy
- Contact Tusla, the local Health Service Executive and Gardaí as appropriate under the reporting procedures of the Children First Act 2015 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.

9 Dealing with an Allegation Against a person Authorised to Act on Behalf of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí

In dealing with an allegation against a person authorised to act on behalf of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí, two procedures must be set in train. Firstly, in respect of the child / young person, Caoimhín Mac Aoidh will act as the lead person. Secondly, in respect of the person against whom the allegation is made, Rab Cherry will act as the lead person.

In putting this procedure into action, Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí will make certain that:

- The first priority is to ensure that no child / young person is exposed to unnecessary risk
- If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person is to be informed
- The Reporting Procedures outlined within this Policy document should be followed. Both primary carers and the child / young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child / young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate and language appropriate manner.
- The person against whom the allegation has been made will be informed as soon as possible of the specific nature of the allegation and given the opportunity to respond
- The membership of the Board of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible
- Any action taken following an allegation of abuse against any person acting in an official capacity on behalf of Cairdeas na bhFidhléirí should be taken in consultation with the Health Service Executive and Gardaí
- After consultation, a lead person, who must be a Committee member, shall be nominated by the Committee who will advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

10 Complaints and Comments Procedure

In the event of a complaint or a comment in respect of child / young persons' protection, the Committee shall undertake to:

- Respond in writing within four weeks
- Rab Cherry will undertake to direct such complaints / comments to the appropriate person
- Verbal comments will be logged and responded to in keeping with the standards in the two points above.

11 Accidents procedure

In order to prevent accidents and manage incidents in respect of child / young person the Board shall undertake to:

- The organisation must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children / young persons involved in the organisation
- Children / young people’s details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file
- External organisations with whom Cairdeas an bhFidléirí has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance
- First aid boxes should be readily available and appropriately stocked with locations clearly marked

12 Confidentiality Statement

Cairdeas na bhFidléirí is committed to ensuring young peoples’ right 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/video recorders will not be used at public performances)

13 Review of the Policy

An annual review of this Policy will be undertaken annually at the organisations AGM which is held during the first week of August each year. The Policy will be evaluated against criteria of the track record of the policy in ensuring child protection, current relevance of each strand, changes which may have an effect on the Policy in the interim year, matters of best practice emerging from other organisations, etc.