

## Headford Music Works

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Section 1 - Child Protection Policy Statement

Section 1 signed as of 1/10/2017

## Section 2 - Code of Behaviour for staff

A code of behaviour for personnel is an essential element of our Child Protection Policy as it creates a supportive environment where staff and volunteers can provide a child-centred approach for children and young people.

Headford Music Work's code of behaviour for staff includes guidelines on taking a child-centred approach, good practice in the work, what constitutes inappropriate behaviour with children and young people, physical contact, and other health and safety matters.

### Child-centred approach

HMW workers and volunteers will endeavour to ensure that:

- All children and young people are treated equally.
- All children and young people are treated as individuals.
- All children and young people are listened to and respected.
- Children and young people are included in decision making, where appropriate.
- Children and young people are encouraged and praised regardless of ability.
- A fun and positive atmosphere is encouraged.
- Where it is necessary, feedback is given constructively, and without blame or criticism.
- Children and young people have their personal space respected.
- A verbal contract is agreed before a group session/activity begins, boundaries are set in advance.
- Feedback from participants is encouraged.
- Teaching aids and materials are appropriate to the age and needs of the group.
- Differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation are respected.

## **Good practice**

HMW workers and volunteers will endeavour to ensure that:

- All participants at the groups events will be registered, so that details of name, address, phone, special requirements and emergency contact number are held, and accessible in case of a mishap.
- Participants in the groups events are made aware of this child protection policy, and concurrent child protection procedures.
- Emergency procedures are in place, and all workers/volunteers are aware of them.
- Children and young people with special needs are included in group events.
- They are prepared for any activities they undertake, both mentally and physically.
- Any concerns are reported to the designated person and reporting procedures are followed.
- All participants are aware of our anti-bullying policy/statement, and are encouraged to report any concerns or worries in relation to bullying.
- Work practice is evaluated on a regular basis.
- Staff and volunteers are appropriately trained.
- All accidents or incidents that occur are reported and recorded in the HMW log book.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- Primary carers are informed of any issues or concerns in relation to their children.
- There is a proper level of supervision for group activities, that takes account of the age and abilities of the children and young people involved, and, where appropriate, to the gender balance of the group.
- Sessional artists are briefed on the work and ethos of the group, and have been provided with a summary of these child protection guidelines.
- Staff and volunteers will be proactive in addressing any issues that arise naturally in the course of the work.
- Staff and Volunteers are discouraged from social media contact with children and young people they meet through their involvement with HMW.

HMW events are public by nature and are run by volunteer leaders, therefore all children must be accompanied by an adult.

## **Inappropriate behaviour**

The following actions are deemed to be inappropriate to group work with children and young people. Where they occur, either through oversight or lack of awareness, all necessary steps will be taken to remedy the situation.

- Spending excessive time alone with children or young people.
- Using offensive language (expletives) or being sexually suggestive through verbal or physical (body) language.
- Criticising, ridiculing or making any individual the focus of unwelcome attention.
- Socialising exclusively with children and young people outside of structured activities.
- Favouring a particular child or young person and giving that person disproportionate attention.
- Discriminating against a child or a young person, either negatively or favourably.
- Forming relationships with children or young people who participate in HMW events via social media (Twitter, Facebook etc.)
- Touch/physical contact between HMW workers/volunteers and children or young people, when it is not initiated by the young participant and is not for their benefit is considered inappropriate, and will be addressed as such.

## **Physical contact**

Where close physical proximity or touch is necessary to the work of the group, staff and leaders should ensure that:

- They seek the consent of the child or young person in relation to physical touch.
- Horseplay is avoided.
- Where touch/physical contact becomes necessary in an emergency situation, as far as is practically possible, others should be present.

## **Health and safety**

In relation to health and safety, staff and volunteers should ensure that:

- Children are not left unsupervised or unattended.
- Safe management of dangerous or unsuitable materials.
- A safe environment free from hazards is provided.
- They are aware of procedures in relation to accidents and other incidents, and follow them accordingly.

### **Section 3 - Reporting procedures**

In line with best practice, HMW have a designated person whose responsibility it is to deal with any child protection and welfare concerns that arise in the course of the groups work. A deputy for this person is also appointed to cover this role, if and when the designated person is unavailable, or if that person is directly involved in an incident, or is accused of the mistreatment of a child, or is under suspicion of mistreating a child.

#### **Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare**

Sorcha Walsh has been designated as the person to contact where there is an issue or a 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.

Sorcha Walsh can be contacted at 087 9301434. Matthew Berrill has been designated as deputy to Sorcha and can be contacted at 087 7811783

Reasonable grounds for concern, as per Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (p.38), include:

- (i) A 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 [e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour].
- (v) Consistent indications, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

## **Recording procedures**

Headford Music Works records any incidents or concerns in an incident log book for the specific purpose of recording concerns about the welfare of children and young people. This book will be kept securely, and its contents are confidential.

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

- Suspicions of abuse.
- Concerns relating to the welfare of a child or young person.
- Worrying observations in relation to observed injuries, or behaviour.
- Concerns in relation to changes in behaviour.
- Any plans to follow up these concerns.

## **Dealing with a disclosure**

Where a child makes a disclosure, the following should be adhered to

- Do not agree under any circumstances to keep a secret.
- Stay calm.
- Listen to the child/young person
- Don't interrupt
- Do not ask questions, or prompt them to try to elicit details.
- Reassure them they did the right thing by telling you.
- Do not make them repeat their story.
- Write down what you recall of their disclosure, verbatim, as soon as possible afterwards.
- Explain, in an age appropriate way, that you are able to help them, but might need the help of some other people whose job it is to keep children safe.
- Reassure them again!

## **Reporting procedures**

- In the first instance, report any disclosure or concern to the designated person in Headford Music Works (named above). If this person is unavailable, their deputy should be contacted.
- Any action taken in response to this should be noted with the other details of the concern/disclosure (see below).
- Record all details, including time and date, and the nature of the concern or the details of the disclosure. Only facts should be recorded (and not opinions) e.g. "he said" "she said," or "s/he began to cry".
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation, prior to making a report, where they feel it is necessary.

- Where necessary, the person who is agreed to be the most appropriate in the circumstances, will discuss the concern with the child's primary carers. Primary carers should be made aware of a report being made to the HSE, except where such action may put that child or young person at greater risk.
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement)
- Where there are reasonable grounds for concern, and it becomes necessary for the designated person to pass the information on to the HSE Duty Social Worker, they shall do so without delay. Information will be shared with due regard to this groups Confidentiality Statement (see section 4).
- In the event that the neither the designated person or their deputy is available, the HMW staff or volunteer who is raising the concern can contact the HSE Duty Social Worker directly.
- Where an emergency occurs outside of HSE hours, the Gardai should be contacted. Similarly, where there is an immediate risk to safety of the child or young person, the Gardai may be contacted directly.
- The person who brings the concern to the attention of the designated person shall be kept informed of the process, with regard to the limitations of confidentiality.

## **Section 4- Confidentiality statement**

This statement seeks to give clear guidance about the sharing of information, where appropriate levels of confidentiality must be maintained.

We in the Headford Music Works are committed to ensuring peoples' right to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the welfare of 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, and this information will be shared with them, unless doing so will put the child/young person at further risk.

### **Taking and Use of Photographs**

With regard to taking and using photographs from Headford Music Works events, parents and carers should be made aware that photographs are an essential part of documenting and promoting the work of the group, and that we undertake to do this responsibly. Therefore:

- Photographs will not be taken of individuals, but will focus on groups of people.
- Photographs may be displayed on the HMW Facebook page, which is a private page that can only be seen by "friends" of the group and not by the general public.
- Photographs will not be published on any other social media or public website.
- Photographs will not be tagged, and parents are asked not to tag their children in group photographs.

HMW cannot be responsible for photographs or footage taken by members of the public during a public event.

## **Section 5- Recruitment and selection of staff**

Headford Music Works undertakes to maintain selection procedures in relation to volunteers and sessional workers, that prioritise the safety and protection of children and young people. In effect this means:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary)
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed by SAG. Any person known to have a criminal conviction related to children, or who conceals information on their suitability to work with children, will not be eligible for employment. Certain staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, which will be sought where it is available.

Should circumstances change and HMW are in a position to contract staff in a paid capacity, this policy will be reviewed.

## **Section 6- Managing and supervising staff**

HMW ensure that all music teachers and leaders have been Garda Vetted.

HMW undertakes to offer new staff/volunteers an induction that will include awareness of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection policy, and reporting procedures.

## **Section 7- Involvement of primary carers**

HMW are committed to involving parents and carers of those children they work with, in the work they do. Parents will be properly informed of group activities, and the group will use sign in sheets to hold contact details for parents and carers.

Where it is appropriate HMW. will issue consent forms for parents to sign in advance of an activity taking place.

HMW will make this policy and its appendices available to all parents and carers of children who participate in HMW activities.

Where concerns arise about a child or a young person's welfare, HMW will respond in a way that meets the need of the child/young person. In line with best practice, we will inform parents/carers of these concerns, except where this endangers a child, or puts them at a greater risk of harm.

Where concerns arise, the reporting procedures outlined above will be followed.

A designated contact person will be available for consultation with parents where parents have any concern arising from their child's involvement with HMW. This person is Joan Crowe, who is contactable at 086 3891860.

## **Section 8- Dealing with allegations against staff**

In the event of a disclosure, or an allegation being made against an employee (staff or voluntary), the safety and protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration.

Details of the disclosure or allegation should be recorded as per the above, and where reasonable grounds for concern exist usual procedure should be followed in relation to reporting to the HSE.

### **Dealing with an allegation against staff**

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Sorcha Walsh will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Matthew Berrill will deal with issues related to that staff member.

Priority will be given to making sure the child or young person involved is NOT exposed to unnecessary risk.

Should an allegation be made against HMW's designated person, the deputy designate should be contacted, and usual procedure should be followed (as per section 3 of this document).

Both parents and carers, and the child, should be informed of HMW's planned course of action in response to a disclosure.

The staff member concerned should be informed of the complaint and the nature of the allegation as soon as possible and given an opportunity to respond.

It is also our policy that where an allegation is made against a member of staff, the HMW committee should be informed as soon as possible. They are then responsible for communicating with the accused member of staff about what action will be taken.

## **Section 9- Complaints Procedures**

All concerns and complaints made to and about Headford Music Works, both verbal and written, will be recorded in the groups log book.

The Designated person, and the Deputy Designated person will act to direct the complaints to the appropriate person.

HMW will aim to respond to any complaint received within two weeks of receiving the complaint.

## **Section 10 - Accidents procedure**

In relation to accidents

HMW will maintain adequate insurance cover for those activities they engage in.

A first aid box will be available for use in case of emergency at HMW events. Where possible, parents should give their child first aid. Where this is not possible, a member of HMW may step in. Where it is possible, HMW staff should obtain verbal consent from parents or carers before continuing, and should continue in the presence of another HMW member.

The use of the first aid box, and any other incidents must be entered in to the log book at the end of an event.

Lastly, in relation to the prevention of accidents, all exposure to dangerous materials must be limited to workers (paid or voluntary).

## **Conclusion**

This Child Protection Policy has been developed with the aim ensuring that children are listened to and respected, and that best practice and procedure are followed where disclosures or allegations are made. This policy also seeks to make workers and volunteers aware of some of the issues that may arise in the course of working with children and young people, and to deal with them appropriately.

## **Contacts**

H.S.E Duty Social Worker, Tuam: 093 24492

GARDA (Headford): 093 35412

Sorcha Walsh (Child Protection Designate) 0879301434

Matthew Berrill (Deputy Child Protection Designate) 0877811783

Joan Crowe (Parent/Carer Liaison) 0863891860

**Encl: APPENDIX – ANTI BULLYING STATEMENT**

## **APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF HMW CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Headford Music Works**

#### **ANTI BULLYING STATEMENT**

**HMW** recognises bullying as repeated aggression, be it verbal, physical, or psychological conducted by an individual or a group against others.

It includes intentionally aggravating or intimidating others through behaviours such as teasing, taunting and excluding, as well as physical and verbal abuse and name calling.

**HMW** does not tolerate any form of bullying. Where an incident of bullying occurs, the following procedure will apply:

- The child or young person who is responsible for the bullying behaviour will be spoken to about their behaviour, and asked to change it to be more acceptable, otherwise they will be asked to leave. This conversation should never occur in a large group, but on a one to one basis at a discreet distance from their peers.
- If that person cannot change their behaviour, they will be asked to leave. Parents and guardians will be contacted to ensure that young person's safety can be maintained.
- The particulars of the incident should be recorded in the groups log book.

## Appendix 2

### Headford Music Works

#### Child Protection Policy

##### Summary

In the course of their work HMW seek to provide children and young people with a safe environment and safe experiences, where their welfare is paramount. The group has a full Child Protection Policy that follows guidelines set out in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children.

HMW Child Protection Policy details a code of behaviour for paid and voluntary workers in relation to their practice with children, as well as procedures for reporting disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, and an anti-bullying statement.

*For this reason, HMW ask parents and carers to be aware of the following*

- HMW events are public by nature and are run by volunteers, therefore all children must be accompanied by an adult.
- All participants at the groups events will be registered, so that details of a name and contact phone number are held, and accessible in case of a mishap.
- There are emergency procedures in place, and a first aid kit is available at events. Where possible, it is preferred that first aid is given by a child's parent/carer.
- Paid workers and volunteers will be proactive in addressing any issues relating to child welfare that arise naturally in the course of their work.
- Workers and Volunteers are discouraged from social media contact with children and young people they meet through their involvement with HMW

##### *Taking and Use of Photographs*

With regard to taking and using photographs from HMW events, parents and carers should be aware that photographs are an essential part of documenting and promoting the work of the group, and that we undertake to do this responsibly. Therefore:

- Photographs will not be taken of individual children but will focus on pairs or groups of children.
- Photographs may be displayed on the HMW Facebook page, which is a private page that can only be seen by "friends" of the group and not by the general public.
- Photographs will not be published on any other social media or public website.
- Photographs will not be tagged, and parents are asked not to tag their children in group photographs.

HMW cannot be responsible for photographs or footage taken by members of the public during a public event. Where parents and carer chose to share their photographs on the Solstice Facebook page, photographs that are "tagged" or are not in line with this policy will be removed.

### ***Where there is an instance of bullying***

HMW does not tolerate any form of bullying (repeated aggression, intentionally aggravating or intimidating others by teasing, taunting and excluding, as well as physical and verbal abuse and name calling). Where an incident of bullying occurs, the following procedure will apply:

- The child or young person who is responsible for the bullying behaviour will be spoken to about their behaviour, and asked to change it to be more acceptable, otherwise they will be asked to leave. This conversation should never occur in a large group, but on a one to one basis at a discreet distance from their peers.
- If that person cannot change their behaviour, they will be asked to leave. Parents and guardians will be contacted to ensure that young person's safety can be maintained.

### ***Where there is an issue or a concern about any aspect of a child or young person's safety and welfare, or an allegation or disclosure of abuse, the following procedure will apply***

- In the first instance any disclosure or concern will be reported to the designated person in HMW. If this person is unavailable, their deputy should be contacted.
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation, prior to making a report, where they feel it is necessary.
- Where there are reasonable grounds for concern, and it becomes necessary for the designated person to pass the information on to the HSE Duty Social Worker, they shall do so without delay. Information will be shared with due regard to this groups Confidentiality Statement.
- Where an emergency occurs outside of HSE hours, the Gardai will be contacted. Similarly, where there is an immediate risk to safety of the child or young person, the Gardai may be contacted directly.

### ***Reasonable grounds for concern are***

- A specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused.
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- An injury, or behaviour that 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.
- Consistent indications, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Sorcha Walsh has been designated as the person to contact where there is an issue or a concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare, she can be contacted at 0879301434. Matthew Berrill is deputy designated person and can be contacted at 087 7811783

**A full copy of the Child Protection Policy that is summarised here can be obtained by contacting HMW parent/carer liaison, Joan Crowe at 0863891860** Any concerns that parents or carers might have in relation to their child's participation at Headford Music Works events, that are not of a child protection or child welfare nature, can be directed to her.

***Headford Music Works, October 2017***