

### Introduction

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is committed to protection and welfare of all members of its community. DkIT is a higher education institution offering multi-level education, predominantly at Level 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Whilst DkIT owes a duty of care to all its students, it also has a particular responsibility to ensure as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service is safe from harm while availing of that service'. (Children First Act 2015). We value and encourage the participation of students in any activity that enhances their educational, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. We are committed to safeguarding the dignity and rights of all members of its community. We do all in our power to create a safe environment. The Institute acknowledges that this responsibility applies whether the child is a student of the Institute or is otherwise under the care or supervision of Institute staff or students. The Institute will uphold the key principle that the welfare of the child is paramount and that children are protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration. In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Adults) Acts 2012- 2016 and the "Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children" (2017) and "Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (Tusla) this Child Safeguarding Statement has been agreed by the DkIT Governing Body.

*The Institute ensures that:*

- *Best practice is fostered*
- *Allegations made or concerns reported by children, or others to Institute staff or students are dealt with appropriately.*
- *Child protection training is provided for those students and staff who work with children*
- *New staff are subject to an agreed recruitment and selection procedure*
- *All students and volunteers who work with children as part of their Programme are subjected to police vetting*
- *Investigations into reported concerns or allegations are carried out in a proper and timely manner.*
- *Students and staff are made aware of counselling services available to them as required.*
- *An Garda Síochána, Tusla and other relevant statutory agencies are kept informed where necessary of any allegations or concerns that relate to children.*

### Implementation

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:

- The Institute has appointed Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as the “relevant person” (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the s child safeguarding statement.
- In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the Institute, DkIT adheres to the relevant procedures set out in DkIT Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children.
- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with students, the Institute adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Students and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the DES and available on the DES website.
- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the Institute-
  - Provides each member of staff with a copy of with a copy of the Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children Institutes Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
  - Encourages managers to avail of relevant training
  - The Institute maintains records of all staff and Board member training.
  - In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all Institute personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children.
  - In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Institute has carried out a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the Institute or participating in Institute activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the Institute procedures for managing those risks is outlined below.
- This statement will be published on the Institute’s website and has been provided to all members of Institute personnel. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.
- This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

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 on, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

**This Safeguarding Statement was approved at the DkIT Governing Body meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020.**