

***YOUNG EUROPEAN STRINGS***  
***CHILD PROTECTION POLICY***

**INTRODUCTION**

All organisations, schools, agencies working with children have an obligation to provide them with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well being and to safeguard them from harm.

Mindful of this duty of care, the Directors of Young European Stings, assisted by the Parents Advisory Committee have drawn up a written policy and procedures outlining our roles and responsibilities in regard to child protection issues. Cognisance has been taken of guidelines laid down in “***Children First National Guidelines***” of the Children Care Act (1991) and Arts Councils Guidelines and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as published in 2011.

The policy will focus on the following areas:

- Code of Behaviour for All Staff
- Responding to Child Protection Concerns
- Recruitment, Selection in Management and Supervision of Staff
- Co-operation with Parents and Carers
- Complaints Procedures
- Confidentiality

Under Irish Law (the Child Care Act 1991) , the legal definition of a child in Ireland is “a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married”.

The Child Protection Policy was implemented in January 2008. This Policy will be made available to all YES permanent, part time staff and all outside professionals, volunteers and parents working with pupils. Courses referred to in this Policy are courses organised by YES and attended by at least one member of staff.

The policy will be reviewed annually at the start of each academic year. The Policy Owners are the Directors of Young European Strings.

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF**

The Code of Behaviour is intended for all school staff, teaching and non-teaching to inform them of their obligations and responsibilities under the guidelines declared in the *Children First Guidelines*. It is intended to aid and advise in order to minimise risks while encouraging best practice in the following areas.

### **Child Centred Approach**

We believe that the personal, social and musical developments of the child flourishes in a culture where:

- Good relationships are encouraged.
- Where pupils feel valued and respected.
- Where support is available for those in difficulty.

Mindful of this we are committed to creating an environment where staff strive to ensure:

- That children will feel secure.
- They are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to.
- Where the children are aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Where all children are treated equally with respect.
- Where all children can learn, develop and enjoy in a positive atmosphere.
- Where support, encouragement and praise regardless of ability is given.
- Where appropriate language (physical and verbal) is used.
- Where we lead by example.

### **To realise the above the following practices will be put in place:**

- i. A register will be kept of all pupils who are enrolled in the school:
  - name
  - address
  - contact details of parents/carers
  - emergency contact numbers
- ii. If orchestra rehearsals, master classes or courses are being held all participants:
  - An attendance sheet will record the names of all those students under 16 years of age attending the session. These pupils must be collected by an adult/person known to them and the pupil must wait in the room / on the premises until the adult arrives to collect him/her.

- Juniors & Toddlers - All pupils must be collected by an adult/person known to them. The adult must go to the door of the Hall to collect the child directly from Maria Kelemen.
- iii Parents of all children up to and including Chamber Orchestra will be requested to be present at individual lessons of all children under 18 years of age. With the agreement of the parent, if a parent cannot be present due to their own decision or reasons known to them it will be understood that lessons may/will go ahead, unsupervised by a parent/carer. Similarly if a child wishes to take the lesson unaccompanied by an adult, their wish may only be accommodated with the agreement of his/her parent.
- iv Individual lessons which take place under the guidance of Mr. Masin for older pupils will not be attended by parents. However the Director of the school is usually in attendance. On those occasions when this is not the case, parents will be requested to stay on site. If that is not possible, the parent must sign a form acknowledging their awareness of their being no significant other on the premises and that they are willing for the lesson to proceed without their presence...

**Yes requires its staff to:**

- i. Plan and be sufficiently prepared both physically and mentally for lessons/courses.
- ii. Report to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) any concerns and follow reporting procedures as outlined in the Policy.
- iii. Observe appropriate behaviour.

**To protect staff themselves staff must ensure the following:**

- i. Avoid leaving pupils unattended at all times.
- ii. Be vigilant in making sure that teaching environment is safe.
- iii. Be aware of fire safety, accident procedures in the teaching venue and in all other venues where pupils are.
- iv. Avoid touching pupils unless necessary to teach a particular skill or technique. Make sure the pupil is comfortable being touched.
- v. Maintain awareness around language and comments made.
- vi. Do not give a lift to a young child/person except where absolutely necessary ensure the primary carer has been informed.

**Role of the Director**

- i. The Directors undertake to circulate the Policy Statement to all parents/guardians at the time of enrolment.
- ii. To evaluate work practice on regular basis.
- iii. To ensure that the designated liaison person and deputy designated liaison person receive training the area of child protection.
- iv. That staff are efficiently prepared and trained.
- v. That staff follow all procedures laid down in the policy.
- vi. That staff maintain awareness around language and comments made and where there is a possibility that an upset may have been caused that the staff member addresses it as soon as practically possible and address it in a sensitive manner with the affected party

### **Bullying**

In the event that a staff member becomes aware of bullying of a student by another student/s, he/she must draw it to the attention of the Directors of Young European Strings. The Directors themselves may become aware of a bullying allegation, either directly from the student or the parent/carer.

The Director will meet the student and parents/carers of the all students involved, investigate in a manner which listens to each student, and come to a solution which is based on restorative rather than retributive justice. The Director will monitor the resolution on an ongoing basis.

### **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

***Designated Personnel*** – the school has nominated the following as the designated liaison person (DLP) to act as a liaison with outside agencies – i.e. the HSE, Garda, parents, children and to support and advise any staff member having concerns around child protection.

***Designated Liaison Person:***                      ***Maria Kelemen***

*Contact Details:*

Telephone Number:                                      ***01 490 5263***

Mobile Number:                                      \_\_\_\_\_

***In the absence of the above named DLP, Bernadette Kehoe, will act as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL).***

*Contact Details:*

Telephone Number: ***01 492 2321***

Mobile Number: ***087 238 0882***

- The school will ensure that appropriate and ongoing training where necessary will be available for the DLP and DDL.
- All staff, primary carers, children and young people must be informed as to whom these individuals are.

### **REPORTING OF INCIDENTS**

Any person, who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse has a responsibility to report their concerns.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- i. A specific indication from a child that he/she was abused.
- ii. A statement from a person who witnessed abuse.
- iii. An illness/injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
- iv. A symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by collaborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
- v. Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

### ***DEALING WITH AND REPORTING A DISCLOSURE – STAFF***

1. The following procedures should apply:
  - Stay calm, listen and allow the child time to say what they need to say.
  - Do not prompt or use leading questions.
  - Reassure the child but do not promise to keep anything secret.
  - Do not make them repeat anything unnecessarily.
  - Explain in an age-appropriate way what will happen next.

2. Following the disclosure the individual should record what he/she remembers as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours, sign and date the record. He/she should then approach the DLP with his/her concerns.

### ***ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON***

- The DLP will make his/her own record of a staff concern (dated and signed) in the critical incident book.
- All information noted should be factual (not opinion).
- The DLP may contact the Health Service Executive (HSE) Duty Social Work Department for an informed consultation prior to making a report.
- Should the DLP then decide that a report is necessary they will complete the standard reporting form (see appendix i) available from the HSE.
- A report should only be made when there are reasonable “grounds for concern” (see appendix ii).
- The DLP must be committed to keeping all information confidential and to sharing it on a need to know basis only. Also he/she must keep the person who reports the incident informed.
- The DLP should also inform the Director of the School. If however the allegation has been made against the Director then the DLP must follow procedures when dealing with allegations against employees/staff (see appendix ii).
- Unless it is likely to put the child at further risk the primary carers must be made aware of the allegations and of the report to the HSE by the designated liaison person.
- In case of emergencies where HSE personnel are not available the DLP should immediately inform the Gardai.

### ***CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT OF YES***

YES is 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 HSE, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.
- Images of a child/young person containing identifying information will not be used for any reason without the consent of a parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that camera/videos will not be used in public performances). The directors will ask all people participating in concerts, photo shoots, television programmes or other events to request the consent of the carers of their members to use of images of the members for publicity purposes by YES and will not use identifying images without this consent.
- The incident report file will be kept in a locked cabinet in the YES office. Any reports completed on courses will kept safely by the Designated or Deputy Designated Liaison person until they can be added to the file in the office.

### ***DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF***

In the instance of an allegation, the first priority of YES is the safety of the child. YES also has a responsibility to the employee.

- Two separate procedures must be followed:
  1. In respect of the child/young person either the DLP or the DDLP will deal with the issues related to the child/young person. In the event that either of these two members of staff has had allegations made against them, the permanent member of staff who has not had allegations made against them will deal with the 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 Director recognises that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending YES. The Director as an employer also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.
- As an employer, the Director will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee.
- The Director will adhere to protocol as previously outlined. Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse of School Employees, in “Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures” from the Department of Education and Science 2002, to authorise any actions required to protect the children in its care. The Director notes that school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious

allegations. Any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. The Director accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.

- The reporting procedures in as outlined should be followed, and the parents/carers and the child/young person should be kept informed of actions planned and taken.
- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and will be given the opportunity to respond.
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with the HSE and Gardaí.
- After consultation, the Director will advise the person accused and take measures appropriate to the level of risk while not unreasonably penalizing the worker – unless necessary to protect the child/young person. Measures could include increased supervision, assignment to different duties, or suspension. Should an allegation take place on a YES organised course and reasonable grounds for concern exist the accused person will stop work immediately on that course.

### ***RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF POLICY STATEMENT***

All organisations, whether statutory or voluntary, public or private have an overall responsibility to safeguard children. With this in mind when seeking staff YES will pay particular attention to the following:

- That clearly defined methods for selecting staff and volunteers will be used.
- That the staff will be required to consent to Garda Clearance with their knowledge.
- At least two references will be required and these references will be followed up verbally.
- That the employees sign a statutory declaration form (see appendix iii).
- That child protection matters will be an item on the agenda of certain meetings throughout the year.
- That all staff, teaching and non-teaching are aware of their obligations under the Child Protection Policy and the procedures to be followed in the event of concerns.
- That no person who is deemed to be “a risk” will be permitted to work or act in a supervisory capacity.



- All freelance tutors will be required to sign a contract

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and the young people in our care YES will ensure that new staff will be made aware of the school's:

- i. Code of Conduct,
- ii. Child Protection Procedures
- iii. Identity and role of the DLP

and will undergo a probationary or trial period.

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: ..... Age ..... Male: Female:  
Address:

.....  
.....

Relationship to child  
.....

Occupation:  
.....

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

Social Workers: ..... School:  
.....

.....  
.....

Public Health Nurse: ..... Gardai:  
.....

.....  
.....

GP: ..... Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club:  
.....

.....  
.....

Hospital: ..... Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups, After  
School Clubs:

.....  
.....

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Yes No  
If yes, what is their attitude?

.....  
.....

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of  
confidentiality)

Name: ..... Occupation:  
.....

Address: .....  
.....

..... Telephone Number:  
.....

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:  
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.....  
**7. Details of Person completing form:**

**Name:** ..... **Occupation:**

.....

**Address:** .....

.....

..... **Telephone Number:**

.....

**Signed:** ..... **Date:**

.....

**Guidance Notes:**

Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area.

Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection. This report form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards.
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency.
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager).

This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested

is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your

report. Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health

Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concern, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

## ***APPENDIX 11***

### ***REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN***

The following except from the “Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (4.3.2 – p. 38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

1. Specific indication from the child or young person that he/she has been abused.
2. An account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused.
3. Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
4. 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).
5. Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

*APPENDIX III*

**DECLARATION FORM**

**Confidential**

**NEW STATUTORY DECLARATION FORM (2 PAGES) RECEIVED FROM  
BERNADETTE )  
AND FORM OF UNDERTAKING (1 PAGE)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> page of Statutory Declaration form**

## **FORM OF UNDERTAKING**

*APPENDIX IV*

**PERMISSION FORM**

Dear Parents,

There will be many occasions throughout your child's involvement and attendance at the YES School of Music where he/she may be required to be involved in photo-shoots, television or radio interviews.

Photographs may be placed on the School's website, published in newspapers, magazines or used for public relation purposes.

It is imperative that you make your wishes known to the school concerning this. Please sign the form below which will be held (on file) for the entire time your child is part of the school community.

I am happy to allow my child to be photographed, filmed or interviewed [  ]

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Year of Admission to School: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish my child to be photographed, filmed or interviewed [  ]

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



*APPENDIX V*

**CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CHILD PROTECTION  
POLICY**

CHECKLIST PROVIDED BY **BERNADETTE ( 2 pages)**

2<sup>nd</sup> PAGE