



Laois Youth Dance Ensemble

Child Protection Policy

Reviewed on February 2018

Introduction

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble is committed to a child-centred approach. We aim to provide an environment of safety and enjoyment for children who take part in activities organised by or associated with our company. LYDE works with children and young people aged 9-24 and believe that all children have the right to be protected from abuse and/or harm at all times and in all situations. To ensure that a culture of safety informs all that we do, Laois Youth Dance Ensemble has developed this Child Protection Policy and associated Code of Practice as part of its overall Health and Safety Management Procedures.

We have classes and rehearsals twice a week at the Ensemble Dance Studio on Wednesdays and Saturdays from January- July; September - December.

Members join the company through free trial or by invitation. LYDE also hosts Laois Dance Platform in which children and young people participate.

The Child Protection Policy comprises:

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble confirms its commitment to ensuring that children under the age of 18 are protected and kept safe from harm while they are being supervised by staff, workshop facilitators and volunteers in the company or at any venue where associated projects are being conducted.

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble will endeavour to protect children by:

- Adopting and applying a Code of Behaviour for staff, volunteers and facilitators based on established Child Protection guidelines;
- Adopting and applying a Code of Safe Teaching Practice for staff volunteer and facilitators based on established and recognised teaching methodologies and practices.
- Fostering an environment where children can feel safe to voice their concerns about their own or other children's safety.
- Responding swiftly to all suspicions, allegations or events;
- Ensuring that all employees, facilitators and volunteers or agents are familiar with our Child Protection Policy and are expected to follow this policy and implement the guidelines and procedures laid down in the policy
- Laois Youth Dance Ensemble Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are any changes in legislation of government directives or if any weaknesses are detected in the policy.
- Detailed procedures and steps to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is implemented in the work of Laois Youth Dance Ensemble. The Child Protection Policy Statement will be available to all staff, boards of management, primary carers, children and young people involved in the organisation.

The Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to safeguard the personal safety of all children who use the facilities or services of Laois Youth Dance Ensemble through actively promoting awareness, good practice and appropriate and effective procedures.

Supporting the Child Protection Policy Statement, Laois Youth Dance Ensemble has formulated detailed policies and procedures covering:

- Code of Conduct
- Good Recruitment and Vetting Procedures
- Staff Training
- Reporting Guidelines
- Recognising Signs and Symptoms of Abuse
- Recognising potential opportunities for harm or danger
- Dealing with Disclosures
- Accidents Procedure
- Photography/Performance Policy
- Methods of Recording

Policy Statement of Child Protection

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Laois Youth Dance Ensemble will endeavour to protect children by:

Adopting and applying a Code of Behaviour for staff, volunteers and facilitators based on established Child Protection guidelines;

Adopting and applying a Code of Safe Teaching Practice for staff volunteer and facilitators based on established and recognised teaching methodologies and practices.

Fostering an environment where children can feel safe to voice their concerns about their own or other children's safety.

Responding swiftly to all suspicions, allegations or events;

Nominating a Designated Manager to co-ordinate our Child Protection Policy;

Ensuring that all employees, facilitators and volunteers or agents are familiar with our Child Protection Policy and are expected to follow this policy and implement the guidelines and procedures laid down in the policy

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are any changes in legislation of government directives or if any weaknesses are detected in the policy.

Supervision of Children

Children should be supervised at all times while on the premises or in our care.

Where children are in our care outside the immediate environment of the teaching studio, adult supervision of an appropriate ratio must be in place.

Any activity, using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision.

Any activity including class work, rehearsal or performance should be carried out only under the direction and supervision of an appropriately qualified individual.

Codes of Behaviour:

All staff, facilitators and volunteers should:

- Set a good example
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Treat all equally respecting differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.
- Discuss boundaries of behaviour and sanctions as appropriate to the activity with children and their primary carers.
- Create an atmosphere of trust.
- Respect children's right to personal privacy.
- Explain to children why any activity may involve physical contact and be clear that the child is comfortable with the level of contact.
- Be vigilant in case an innocent action might be misinterpreted.
- Not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with a child in their care.
- Avoid situations where they are left alone with a child.
- Don't single out a particular child for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus of attention.
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children e.g. outside of structured studio activities. Where possible, separate toilet facilities should be reserved for children's use only.
- Except in the case of emergency, staff should not be alone in a vehicle with a child.

Codes of Practice

All staff, facilitators and volunteers should:

- Ensure that the physical space in which they work is appropriate to the activity.
- Ensure that all participants are suitably equipped for the activity in progress in terms of clothing, footwear and protective garments.
- Be cognisant of children's individual limitations.
- Work at level that is appropriate to the age, and physical ability and gender of the child.
- Avoid any creative work that could be considered age inappropriate. Where the specificities of a creative work call for age inappropriate use of language or gesture or activities, prior parental/primary carer agreement must be obtained.
- Take care to follow the accepted physical steps of warm up, activity and cool down.
- Evaluate their work and practices on a regular basis.
- Maintain an awareness of current trends and developments with regard to safe practice in their field
- Report and record any incidents or accidents.

Physical Restraint

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble staff or volunteers must never physically restrain a child except in the following situations:

- To prevent physical injury to the child, or to other children, or to him/herself or other staff members
- To prevent damage to property
- To prevent the child committing a criminal offence

*** If physical restraint is deemed necessary it must always be appropriate and reasonable.**

Recruitment and Selection Guidelines:

When recruiting for staff Erica Borges, Laois Youth Dance Ensemble is responsible for ensuring that applicants complete an application which:

- Asks the applicant to list any convictions, or cautions they may have.
- Asks for the applicants consent to Garda Vetting
- Point out that a refusal to grant consent for such a clearance would be sufficient grounds for Laois Youth Dance Ensemble not to progress any further with the application.
- Provide two independent reference contacts that are recent, relevant and can be confirmed verbally and in writing.

Erica Borges, Laois Youth Dance Ensemble director will also undertake:

- To clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the applicant. Employ only those persons with relevant and current qualifications suited to their defined role.

Induction and Training for Staff

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble need to ensure that, once recruited, all staff should be well informed, trained, supervised and supported so that they are less likely to become involved in actions or practices which can be open to misinterpretation or cause harm or injury.

This process should cover the following:

- Induction – The need to be familiar with Ensemble’s Child Protection Policy, Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Practices.
- Probationary Period – Review suitability of new staff within six month.
- Supervision and Support – Receive an adequate level of supervision and be assisted in supplementing any training/education needs.

All staff will be trained in issues relating to:

- Customer care – This includes familiarisation with Child Protection Policy, Codes of Behaviour and Safe Teaching Practices.
- Reporting Procedures – Action to be taken if an employee suspect Child Abuse /Inappropriate Behaviour/Unsafe Practices.

Involvement of primary carers

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble is committed to being open with all primary carers and to this end we undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of the existence of our Child Protection Plan;
- Regularly inform primary carers of activities and potential activities within the Ensemble;
- Issue consent forms where relevant;
- Comply with health and safety practices;
- Adhere to our recruitment policies;
- Operate in accordance with best practice;
- Ensure as far as possible that activities are age and ability-appropriate;
- Encourage communication with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child's welfare.

Where we have concerns about the welfare of a young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child
- Inform primary carers unless such an action puts the child 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 Gardai.

In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child and inform primary carers as appropriate.

How to recognise inappropriate behaviour between an adult and a child

Inappropriate physical contact between an adult and a child

Signs and Symptoms:

- Adults behaving suspiciously: hanging around the toilet or changing rooms when there is no reason for them to be there.
- Indulging in gratuitous horseplay with a child.
- Using inappropriate language in the presence of a child
- Specific indication from a child that he/she has been abused.
- Evidence such as injury consistent with abuse.

Dealing with Disclosure

In the event of a young person making allegations or disclosure of abuse staff should:

- Remain calm and allow the child to complete any accusation/disclosure
- Don't use any leading questions or prompt for details
- Offer reassurance but do not undertake to keep the information secret.
- Explain to the child what your next course of action will be (with due consideration to the young person's age).
- Make a written record of the facts of the allegations or incidents including such details as time, date persons involved
- Inform the Designated Officer/Deputy of the event.

Dealing with allegations against staff

Artistic Director Erica Borges will deal with both issues related to the young person and staff members.

Reporting Procedures

All staff should be made aware that allegations can be made and that there is a procedure to deal with that laid down in the Child Protection Policy. In all circumstances all allegations should be reported to the Designated Officer

The Designated Officer is Erica B. Pessanha Borges
35 Lakeside Gardens, Portlaoise – co. Laois
Telephone: 087.132.8852



Following a disclosure or allegation a decision will be taken by The Designated Officer with regard to:

Informing the primary carer about allegation. (In circumstances where it is deemed necessary the Designated Officer may contact the HSE prior to contacting the primary carer.).

Disciplinary Procedure

In accordance with the outcome of the formal investigations:

- Dismissal may occur
- The Gardai may be informed
- The HSE may be informed.

Confidentiality

In the interest of safe guarding the child, information will only be made available on a need to know basis.

Primary Carers and children have the right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is made to the HSE, unless doing so constitutes further risk to the children involved.

Accidents procedure

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble will ensure:

- That a comprehensive register of young people involved in our programmes is kept at all times.
- An accident/incident register is available for all staff.
- That first aid kits are available to all staff.
- That any external organisation with whom we deal provides proof of public liability insurance.
- That all accident/incidents are recorded promptly as outlined in the reporting procedures.

Child Protection and Photography

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble needs to balance its need to have photographs for press and publicity purposes against its requirement to provide a safe environment and a level of confidentiality for young people. There is also the consideration that parents or relatives may want to take photographs for the family album. A blanket prohibition is therefore considered too extreme. We are aware of the potential that exists for the misuse of photographic material and has developed a policy to meet this threat. This policy is based on the twin pillars of staff

vigilance and carer consent. Staff will be present at all times when press photographs are being taken and press photographs will only be taken with prior carer consent.

Child Protection and Performance Work

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble will occasionally provide young people performance work with outside producing companies or venues. The first priority in such situations is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. In such cases, the requirements of our Child Protection Policy will be made fully known to such production companies and venues. In any case where a production company or venue is unable to meet the requirements of safe practices outlined in this policy we will undertake to breach the gap in these practices. Where this arrangement cannot be facilitated, we will, in accordance with our declared policies, withdraw the children from the event until suitable procedures are put in place.

Summary

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble Child Protection Policy reflects the concerns and needs of an organisation where the involvement of children is central to its role in arts education and training. The policy document has identified the appropriate Codes of Behaviour and Practice for our staff when dealing with children and the appropriate reporting procedures to be followed if a suspicion or allegation of abuse or incident of bad practice occurs.

Staff training in The Child Protection Policy and Procedures is vital, not just for the safety of the children, but also because it will equip staff with the correct information and promote confidence that the Child Protection Policy works in their interest too. Used properly, the Policy should provide a model of best practice thereby achieving its aim of providing a safe and secure environment for children.

REPORTING FORM

STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

In case of emergency or outside Health Service executive office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána, to Principal Social Worker or Duty Social Worker:

1. Details of Child: Name: _____

Male: Female:

2. Address: _____

Age/D.O.B. _____

School: _____

3. Name of Mother: _____

Name of Father: _____

Address of Mother if different to Child: Address of Father if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____ ; _____

Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

Household Composition:

Name:

Relationship to Child:

Date of Birth:

Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation:

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known):

Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:
Name: _____

Age:

Male; Female:

Address: _____

Relationship to Child:

Occupation:

_____.

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

Social Workers:

School:

Public Health Nurse:

Gardaí:

G.P.:

Hospital:

Other, specify

Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Yes No

Are the Parents/Legal Guardians supportive? Yes No

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:

Details of Person completing form:

Name:

Date:

Occupation:

Signed: _____

GUIDANCE NOTES:

The Health Service Executive has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. The Health Service Executive therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive Personnel.
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the Health Service Executive.
- 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 Service Executive 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. The Health Service Executive aims to work in partnership with parents.

If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive 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 concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her. Please see Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children for full contact details for Health Service Executive Social Work Department and 'Keeping Safe' Information and Advice Persons contact details.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM LYDE

Report Form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

DATE: Name of person reporting:

Time:

Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed

Nature of Incident or injuries: _____

Parent's view(s): _____ Child's view(s)
(if known): _____

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

Name:

Age:

Male: Female:

Address:

Telephone:

Declaration Form

Confidential Declaration form for all those working with children and young people. (to be signed by applicant for positions with Laois Youth Dance Ensemble

Surname:

First Name:

Date of Birth:

Place of birth:

Address: _____

Tel. No:

Mobile No

Any other name(s) previously known as:

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people? Yes No

If yes, please outline the reason below.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence (s):

Signed:

Date:

Address:

Telephone:

Laois Youth Dance Ensemble Injury & Accident Report Form

Date and time of occurrence:

.....

Class/rehearsal at which accident happened:

.....

Name of injured person:

.....

Address

.....

Telephone (Mob).....
(Home / Work)..... Email address

.....

During the class/ rehearsal, before the class/rehearsal, after the class/rehearsal while on the premises (circle as appropriate)

Details of injury / Detail what happened and where in the body hurt and what was done; Also, what is state now (as they leave)

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.....

.....

Name of teacher:

.....

Address of teacher:

.....

Telephone (Mob).....

Email address:

.....

Witness (if any)

Name.....

Address.....

*Follow up – In all cases LYDE staff to ring the injured person the next day and write the results here:

.....

.....Signed.....

(person who filled out this form) Date.....

Time.....