



# Paper Lanterns Teen & Young Adult Literary Journal Child Protection and Welfare Policies Document

05.11.2023

[paperlanternsjournal@gmail.com](mailto:paperlanternsjournal@gmail.com)

## 1. Introduction:

Paper Lanterns Teen & Young Adult Literary Journal is a journal published twice a year. Paper Lanterns YA Literary Journal promotes the voices of young people and provides new and exciting content for a teen and young adult audience.

Paper Lanterns is committed to providing opportunities for young readers, writers and artists. At least 50 percent of contributors are teenagers, giving them the unique platform to share their stories alongside YA writers and artists.

Paper Lanterns also runs launches, writing workshops and book clubs.

Here at Paper Lanterns, we are committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. Children's welfare and safety is our top priority. We comply with Children First: National Guidelines for Child Protection and Welfare. To achieve this, we have a Child Protection Policy and Procedures which guide our work. Copies of our Child Protection Policy are available from **Grace Kelley** ([grace.paperlanterns@gmail.com](mailto:grace.paperlanterns@gmail.com)), our Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection, and on our website.

Parents/guardians are children's primary carers. We work in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure children's safety and enjoyment of the activities we offer. We ask you to take some time to read our guidelines and programme information. If you have any questions or concerns you can talk to Grace Kelley, our Designated Person for Child Protection.



A child protection policy is a statement of our commitment to keep children and young people safe and to report any concerns about their welfare. The policy will contain procedures for how this is done in the organisation.

All staff and volunteers at Paper Lanterns will be made aware of the policy and procedure and child/vulnerable adult protection will be covered in detail as part of the induction and training programme.

All staff will be required to report any concerns over behaviour or other evidence that may potentially indicate the presence of child or vulnerable adult abuse.

## **2. Guiding Principles:**

Here at Paper Lanterns we provide the following services to children/young people:

Publication of their creative work and book reviews, launches of the journal, a book club, and workshops.

We believe the following:

1. Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who participates in the journal is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years.
3. All children and young people have an equal right to attend a service and be published by an organisation that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
4. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who participates in the journal, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
5. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation.
6. Workers/volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.



Our Designated Liaison Person is **Grace Kelley**

[grace.paperlanterns@gmail.com](mailto:grace.paperlanterns@gmail.com)

### **3. Types of Abuse and How They May be Recognised.**

*Please see chapter 2 of Children First, the National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children for more details.*

*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* defines

four categories of abuse: **neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.** A

child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Definitions of abuse and how abuse can be recognised can be found in Appendix A.

Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

**Tusla should always be informed when a staff member or volunteer has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.**

### **4. Circumstances That May Make Children More Vulnerable to Harm**

Paper Lanterns acknowledge that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

1. Parent or Carer Factors
2. Child Factors



3. Community Factors
4. Environmental Factors
5. Poor Motivation or Willingness of Parents/Guardians to Engage.

## **5. Procedure for Reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns**

If we have a child protection concern about a child we are obliged to report it to a Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive (HSE), or in an emergency, to An Garda Síochána.

Reckless endangerment of children is a criminal offence under Irish law which could result in criminal prosecution and imprisonment for failure to comply with the relevant provisions of the appropriate legislation.

The Designated Liaison Person should be notified promptly of any concerns with regard to the behaviour of a volunteer or any allegations of abuse made by a child or an adult.

Records will be kept of all concerns.

The Designated Liaison Person, in consultation with the person who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the Designated Liaison Person will report to Tusla. If the DLP decides not to make a report, the worker/volunteer with the reasonable concern is still entitled to make a report to Tusla under Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, should they wish to do so.

What information will be passed on?

- We will pass on the child's name, address and age, your name and address and will say what the reason for concern is.
- We will also include the name of the person making the report.



- Anyone making a report of suspected child abuse, provided they act 'reasonably and in good faith' will have immunity from civil liability (Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998).

If the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting are to be recorded;
- If any actions are taken as a result of the concern, these should be recorded;
- The worker or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla;
- The worker or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or The Garda Síochána.
- The worker or volunteer who raised the concern should also be reassured that if they do choose to report to Tusla, they are covered by the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

Local Tulsa Contact Telephone Number - Dublin City - Tel 01-8467235

[am.dnc@tusla.ie](mailto:am.dnc@tusla.ie)

In emergency contact **An Garda Síochána** 999/112

## **6. Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern**

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused



- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

## **7. Immediate Risk of Harm to a Child**

If you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí without delay.

## **8. Talking to Parents About Concerns for Their Child**

The DLP will contact the parents/ guardians of the child if a concern about their welfare is raised, unless doing so might further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment or put the reporter at risk of harm. These conversations will be guided by the best practice outlined on page 34 of Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2nd Edition published by Tulsa.

## **9. Managing Retrospective Disclosures**

If an adult discloses abuse that took place during their childhood and if any child protection issues arise and the alleged perpetrator is identifiable, we will pass the information on to Tulsa.

## **10. Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse from a Child**

The following approach will be taken if we receive disclosure of abuse from a child. See Appendix A for definitions of abuse.

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser



- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of this Guidance and legislation
- Explain your duty to report the abuse
- Follow the procedure set out in Section 5 of this policy.

## **11. Record Keeping**

Good quality information is important for keeping records of protection concerns and disclosures. This will assist the DLP and necessary statutory agencies. Information should be factual, easy to read, dated and signed and records should be written up as soon as possible.

All records in relation to complaints and concerns are held securely and only shared on a need to know basis in line with statutory requirements.

Confidentiality means that information in relation to you or your children will only be shared with people who 'need to know'. Personal information about your family will be treated with respect and records will be securely stored.

## **12. Training**

Staff undertake the Children First E-Learning Programme by Tulsa.

## **13. Safe Recruitment and Management**

All Paper Lanterns staff are subject to a screening process which includes an interview, an application and reference check. Where Garda Vetting is available and necessary, it will be obtained. All staff and volunteers are asked to sign a declaration stating that they are suitable to work with children and young people and that they will abide by our child protection policy. Staff undertake the Children First E-Learning Programme by Tulsa.

## **14. Code of Behaviour**

Employees and Volunteers working with Paper Lanterns should never engage in or allow:

- The use of inappropriate language or behaviours.



- Physical punishment of any kind.
- Sexually provocative games or sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- The use of sexually explicit or pornographic material - noting that all media products: CDs, DVDs, computer software etc. – should be checked for its appropriateness with regard to age and suitability
- Private messaging with children through social media accounts, or mobile numbers.

Paper Lanterns employees and volunteers will create a positive creative safe space for children.

## **15. Management of Allegations of Abuse Against Staff or Volunteers**

- Paper Lanterns will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/carers as appropriate.
- Pending the outcome of the investigation by the Tusla, the Child and Family
- Agency and/or the Gardaí, the measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following: suspension of duties of the person accused (with pay in the case of a staff member), re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children/young people, working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation or other measures as deemed appropriate.
- Paper Lanterns will notify the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The staff member/volunteer has a right to respond to this and the response should be documented and retained.
- Paper Lanterns will ensure that the principle of ‘natural justice’ will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- Paper Lanterns will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and any decisions taken on action in regard to the staff member/volunteer will be taken in consultation with these agencies.





- The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this
- period and Paper Lanterns will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.
- Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

## **16. Safe Management of Activities with Children**

During events (festivals, book clubs, writing groups, open mic readings), children will have a set drop-off and collection time that will be coordinated with teachers, librarians, event staff, parents, and the Paper Lanterns team.

A First Aid Officer will be appointed for the duration of the event.

Details of all children's medical and dietary requirements will be collected.

A media consent policy will be collected and signed by parents in the instance of photography at the event.

All children will be treated with equal respect.

Bullying will not be tolerated and an open reporting mechanism will be in place. The Designated Liaison Person should be notified promptly of any concerns with regard to the behaviour of a volunteer or any allegations of abuse made by a child or an adult.

## **17. Complaints**

A copy of our complaints policy can be found on our website

## **18. Anti-bullying**

Paper Lanterns is committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment in which all children are free from the fear of being bullied.

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity,



sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable. These include: children with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children and those perceived to be LGBT; and children of minority religious faiths.

Staff and volunteers will look out for the signs and symptoms of bullying including those outlined above. Children are encouraged to report any bullying at Paper Lanterns to a member of staff.

Staff will consider safeguarding concerns and report the issue to the DLP.

Consider who is involved and talk to all parties to get their version of events and work with them to discuss the best way to get assurance it won't happen again. All staff are required to complete a bullying reporting and monitoring form when dealing with incidents of bullying.

## **19. Communicating with Children and Parents or Guardians**

Parents and guardians can expect;

- your child's safety and welfare to be the top priority.
- To be informed about and asked to give your consent for all activities your child is involved in.
- to be asked for some personal information, such as contact details and any health information which is relevant for your child.
- that staff or volunteers are carefully selected and suitable to work with children and young people.
- To be given copies of all policies and procedures upon request, in addition to making them available on the website
- To see any records that are kept about you or your children upon request
- To be welcome at all activities.



## **20. Information for Children About Their Right to be Protected From Harm**

Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, violence, punishment and neglect, whether physical or mental. We encourage all young people who have questions about this while participating in the journal to contact us.

## **21. Review**

This policy and procedues will be reviewed at least every 2 years.



## Appendix A -Definitions of Abuse

Please see chapter 2 of Children First, the National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children for more details.

These definitions are not legal definitions

Neglect is defined as ‘to deprive a child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care’. The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child’s needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child’s medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child’s age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

A reasonable concern for the child’s welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

**Emotional abuse** is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child’s basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children’s emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.



Ill-treatment is defined as 'to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated'. Emotional abuse is covered in the definition of ill-treatment used in the Children First Act 2015.

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where **the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways: Rejection

- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned) Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

**Physical abuse** is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse is covered in the references to assault in the Children First Act 2015. The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result **the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking



- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling Use of excessive force in handling Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child  
An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification  
Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
- Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
- Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
- Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.



## Appendix B: Parents' Cooperation

**In order to help ensure children and young people's safety and welfare we ask parents to:**

- Bring and collect children on time for the activities. Staff at Paper Lanterns are not responsible for children outside of programme hours.
- Give us any relevant information (e.g. health, ability, emergency contact).
- Follow directions of staff (facilitators/leaders) when requested.
- Complete and sign registration and consent forms for programmes as requested.