

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION
POLICY
July 2026**

Document Control

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1. Nature of Service and Principles to Safeguard Children and Vulnerable Adults from Harm

The Irish Museum of Modern art (IMMA) is Ireland's National Cultural Institution for Modern and Contemporary Art. From our site at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, our diverse and ambitious programme comprises exhibitions, commissions, and projects by leading Irish and international artists, as well as a rich engagement and learning programme. Together, these provide audiences of all ages with the opportunity to connect with contemporary art and unlock their creativity.

IMMA is home to the National Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art, started in 1990 and now numbering over 4,500 artworks by Irish and international artists. We make this national resource available through exhibitions at IMMA and other venues nationally and internationally, engagement and learning programmes and digital resources. We are committed to providing a high quality and rewarding visitor experience.

A considerable proportion of visitors to IMMA are children and young people who enjoy the learning opportunities on offer. We are committed to a child-centred approach and to ensuring the safety and protection of all children under the age of 18 years and vulnerable adults who visit us. Many of these visit as part of an organised group or with family and friends. While the primary responsibility for children, or vulnerable adults' welfare rests with the primary carer, IMMA will ensure as far as it is reasonably practicable, that children, young people and vulnerable adults who interact with IMMA, are safe and protected from harm. The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility.

2. Scope

This Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy, and our Guiding Principles apply to all IMMA Board members, staff, including self-employed and freelance persons engaged by IMMA, students on work placements and volunteers.

Contractors who provide services to IMMA such as security and catering providers will be advised of IMMA's Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and will be required to meet the policy requirements as part of their contract terms and conditions.

This policy extends to all interactions with children and vulnerable adults (on-site, off-site, and online).

Definition of a Child

'The Child Care Act 1991 defines a child as a 'person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married' (S.2.1).

Definition of Vulnerable Adult as per the Adult Safeguarding Bill 2017

As per the Adult Safeguarding Bill, 2017, an adult at risk means a person, who has attained the age of 18 years, who is unable to take care of himself or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself from abuse or harm.

3. Aim of this Policy

This policy states that all staff and volunteers have a duty to report concerns over the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Any suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It sets out guidelines and procedures for staff to follow if they have reasonable grounds for concern about the safety and welfare of children that they meet.

The policy also sets clear guidelines and procedures on action to be taken if allegations of abuse are made against IMMA staff or volunteers. IMMA is committed to ensuring that all documentation in relation to record-keeping of child protection and welfare concerns is stored securely and appropriately.

4.Guiding Principles

IMMA is committed to creating a safe and enjoyable environment for children and vulnerable adults. It undertakes to provide an experience where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount with reference to the Children First: National Guidance Document (2011) and the Children First Act, 2015, which reference the key principles for best practice in Child Protection.

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IMMA has adopted these Guiding Principles, this Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, and a Child Safeguarding Statement to underpin its commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people who engage with NMI and its services. This IMMA Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy provide staff and volunteers with the necessary information and guidance to be compliant with The Children's First Act 2015 and to protect children. This document has been aligned with the Children's First Act 2015 & Children First: National Guidance for The Protection and Welfare of Children (DYCA 2017).

This Policy also refers to changes to the vetting / recruitment of people who are working with children, which is addressed in the National Vetting Bureau Act (Children and Vulnerable Persons) 2012. Our guiding principles are also underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991, and Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998. In drafting this Policy, we also took into consideration relevant definitions provided for in the Adult Safeguarding Bill 2017.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

IMMA is committed to a child-centred approach in its work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. It undertakes to provide a safe environment and experience where the welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount.

IMMA will refer any child protection and welfare issues to the appropriate agencies. If IMMA encounters or has concerns or suspects of abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, the Designated Liaison Persons will arrange for a report of these concerns to the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána. Concerns regarding vulnerable adults should also be reported to the IMMA Designated Liaison Persons.

DLP: Sheena Barrett (087 9800152)

Deputy DLP: Gale Scanlan (086 8269208)

The DLP is responsible for:

- Acting as a source of advice on child protection matters;
- Acting as a source of advice on concerns regarding welfare and/or suspected abuse of vulnerable adults;
- Coordinating action in relation to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection matters within the organisation;
- Liaising with Tusla, the HSE and An Garda Síochána and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

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IMMA's Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy will be made accessible through its website www.imma.ie or on request from an IMMA Designated Liaison Person. A copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed in the Museum reception lobby.

All staff must report concerns immediately.

6. Child-Centred Approach and Code of Behaviour for IMMA Staff

In keeping with the commitment to a child centred approach IMMA staff will:

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally and with respect
- Maintain supervision ratios (2:16 under 12, 2:25 ages 12–18)
- Avoid being alone with a child or a vulnerable adult. If this is necessary, ensure it is in a space visible to others, doors open etc
- No direct personal communication via social media etc with children under the age of 16. Participants in TY Programme or Youth Advisory Group can be emailed when cc'ing the parent or guardian
- Agree group contact before beginning sessions
- Do not provide transport to children or vulnerable adults
- Report breaches immediately
- Register the primary carer of each child /young person, or vulnerable adult as appropriate, participating in an IMMA activity (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact), if they are leaving their children or the vulnerable adult for whom they care for in the care of IMMA staff for the duration of the workshop;
- Make primary carers, children/young people, vulnerable adults, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures;
- Request primary carers to supervise the children, or vulnerable adults in their care at all times;
- Require facilitators and others working with children and vulnerable adults at IMMA who are non IMMA staff to be made aware of and accept our Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policy,
- Set out clearly for young people requesting work experience the exact nature of the placement, the place and conditions of work and ensure that he/she is comfortable with the proposed arrangements before commencement;
- Report any concerns to the IMMA Designated Liaison Person ensuring reporting procedures are followed;
- Encourage children and vulnerable adults to report any bullying, concerns or worries;

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- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Have appropriate work practices in place and evaluate them on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff
- Report and record any incidents and accidents
- Update and review relevant policies and procedures regularly;
- Have procedures in place for dealing with lost /found children
- Inform primary carers of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision, based on adequate ratios, according to age, abilities and activities involved;
- Ensure, as appropriate, that primary carers are present at all educational sessions/workshops;
- Have an active policy in relation to concerns around child protection and vulnerable adults;
- Respond promptly to concerns; and
- Maintain awareness of child protection issues when engaging with children and young people and in particular, around language and comments made.

7. Good Practice – see comment

Appropriate Communication

- Use respectful and supportive language, encouraging children and vulnerable adults to use their voice and feel safe to create
- Avoid aggressive, offensive, or isolating behaviour including favouritism
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries

8. Recognising and Reporting Concerns

If any staff member of IMMA or any person involved with IMMA has any concerns or issue about any aspect of a child or vulnerable adult's safety or welfare, immediate contact should be made with the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person to ensure that procedures are followed, and appropriate steps are taken in response to that concern and/or issue. Concerns may include neglect, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children list the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

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- An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse;
- A child or young person saying or indicating by other means that they have 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 in any other way;
- Any concerns about possible sexual abuse;
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect;
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.

Abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person or vulnerable adult; sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

When dealing with children or vulnerable adults, you need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to them. They need to have someone they can trust to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children and vulnerable adults may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be times or circumstances when they may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives ie children and vulnerable adults with disabilities, with communication difficulties, in care or living away from home, or with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following list is intended to help you identify the range of issues that may place children and vulnerable adults at greater risk of abuse or neglect. It is important for you to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that a child or vulnerable adult in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

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Parent or carer factors:

- Drug and alcohol misuse;
- Addiction, including gambling;
- Mental health issues;
- Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability;
- Conflictual relationships;
- Domestic violence; and
- Adolescent parents.

Child or Vulnerable adult factors:

- Age;
- Gender;
- Sexuality;
- Disability;
- Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide;
- Communication difficulties;
- Trafficked/Exploited;
- Previous abuse; and
- Being a Young carer.

Community factors:

- Cultural, ethnic, religious, or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child, or vulnerable adult welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction; and
- Culture-specific practices, including:
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage

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- Honour-based violence
- Radicalisation

Environmental factors:

- Housing issues;
- Children or vulnerable adults who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently;
- Poverty/Begging;
- Bullying; and
- Internet and social media-related concerns.

Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians or carers to engage:

- Non-attendance at appointments;
- Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected;
- Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change;
- Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services; and
- Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans.

You should consider these factors as part of being alert to the possibility that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of suffering abuse and in bringing reasonable concerns to the attention of the DLP or Deputy DLP who will in turn bring such matters to the attention of the appropriate statutory agency.

In respect of a Vulnerable Adult, financial abuse may also be featured.

The Designated Liaison Person, in consultation with the staff member who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the staff member who expresses concern will be required to complete a file report in consultation with the Designated Liaison Person outlining the situation, including the date, time and people involved, the report should be factual. Any opinions should be stated as such and supported by factual information;

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- Staff will facilitate direct access to the Designated Liaison Person or his/her Deputy if requested by a primary carer or by a child or young person;
- The Designated Liaison Person will decide the most appropriate action to be taken to deal with the concern and may decide to discuss it with the primary carers and /or make a report to the Tusla Duty Social Worker, the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána. If any query or concern in relation to child protection arises out of Tusla office hours, An Garda Síochána should be contacted directly in that regard;

Emergencies

Under no circumstances should a child or vulnerable adult be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending HSE intervention. In the event of an emergency where you think a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger and you cannot contact the DLP, you should contact An Garda Síochána. This may be done through any Garda Station (nearest to IMMA is Kilmainham Garda station 01 666 9700).

9. Responding to Disclosures

Listen calmly, do not promise confidentiality or 'to keep a secret,' record accurately. Do not use leading questions or prompt details. Regardless of how a concern comes to a staff member's attention, it must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person at the earliest opportunity.

10. Confidentiality and GDPR

Information shared on a need-to-know basis and stored securely under GDPR.

11. Use of Images

Parental/Guardian Consent is required. Images stored securely and deleted from devices after transferring.

12. Health and Safety

Adherence to IMMA Health and Safety Policy, available via Bamboo including First Aid practice. Children must be supervised. Accidents recorded using official forms.

13. Training and Recruitment

Mandatory Children First and Vulnerable Adult training for all relevant staff – see links on Bamboo HR and Garda vetting where required. At least two references that are recent, relevant, independent, and verbally confirmed will be necessary.

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Undergo a probationary period as in the contract of employment and this policy embedded in the Induction pack provided to all new staff members by HR.

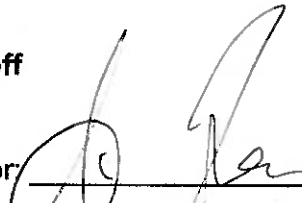
14. Recording and Documentation

Records must be factual, accurate, and stored securely. The DLP is responsible for keeping records related to Child Protection in a locked filing cabinet. The Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person are the only people to have access to the records.

15. Risk Assessment

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Control Measures
Inadequate supervision	Medium	High	Staff ratios, monitoring
Inappropriate behaviour	Low	High	Code of conduct, training and recruitment protocols, CCTV
Online risks	Medium	Medium	Internet filters, supervision
Image misuse	Low	High	Avoid taking photos of children unless necessary. Written Consent procedures, GDPR adherence

Sign-off

Director: 

Date: 3 July 2026