



YMCA Ireland(ROI) Child Safeguarding Statement 2018-19: Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

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1. Introduction

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been drawn up in line with Children First which states the key principles of child protection and welfare that inform both policy and best practice as follows:

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- The best interests of the child should be paramount.
- The overall aim in all dealings with children and their families is to intervene proportionately to support families to keep children safe from harm.
- Interventions by the State should build on existing strengths and protective factors in the family.
- Early intervention is key to obtaining better outcomes. Where it is necessary for the State to intervene to keep children safe the minimum intervention necessary should be used.
- Children should only be separated from parents/guardians when alternative means of protecting them have been exhausted.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
- Parents/guardians have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/guardians and families. Where there is conflict, the child's welfare must come first.
- Child protection is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of children.

Note The term 'safeguarding' refers to protecting children from harm as well as promoting their welfare and development whilst in your care

In addition to the procedures listed below and in our risk assessment, the ethos of the YMCA is to support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service. The links below give a list of YMCA policies and programme documentations that underpin our organisation:

- [Ethos](#)
- [Governance](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Personnel](#)
- [Safeguarding and Pastoral Care](#)
- [YMCA Programme Policies](#)

This Statement seeks to lay out the value base, procedures and guidelines required for YMCA staff & volunteers to ensure effective child protection. It can and should be added to where circumstances and programmes require it eg residential centres.

For the purposes of this document: -

'General Secretary' refers to the person who heads the National Department or Association

'Worker'- refers to a person (18 years or over) who is involved in leadership of any organisations or groups.

'DLP' Designated Liaison Person

'CSS' Child Safeguarding Statement

Key Legislation

- Child Care Act 1991/Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Criminal Justice Act (reckless endangerment) 2006
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016
- Children First Act 2015 – fully commencing on Dec 11th 2017
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017

The CSS also follows the Guidelines as set out in

- Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools

YMCA Ireland recognises that young people attend YMCA Programmes for enjoyment, social contact and personal development. They should not suffer from abuse wherever or however it occurs.

Staff and volunteers who are selected, or appointed to work with children and young people in local Associations, should enjoy their involvement, confident in the knowledge of the existence of clear guidelines and if required, access to good support and advice.

The Appropriate Statutory Agencies and definition of a Young Person as per Children First. Contact numbers for agencies can also be found in [Contact Details](#)

Review of CS Procedures and Guidelines

YMCA Ireland will review the CSS on an annual basis with all staff and volunteers. The date of each review and the staff involved will be recorded for Good Practice and Information purposes.

The Executive Committee will endorse any amendments to the Child Safeguarding Statement on an annual basis at either the September or October Executive Committee meetings.

Date of Next Statement review with core staff – By end of September 2018

Date of Next Statement Review with Executive Committee – By end of October 2018

Designated Safeguarding Officers 2018

YMCA Ireland DCPO

Michele Taylor – Training and Policy Officer

YMCA Ireland DLP

Tom Kent - Director of Programmes

DDL

Brian Murtagh - General Secretary West Dublin

DDL

David Backhouse - Cork Regional Director

Child Protection Vetting and Advice Panel: Campbell Killick and Theresa McCarthy and appropriate designated officers

Designated Person Contact Details can be found via the link [DLP Contact Details](#)

2. Principles of Good Practice

The following is a summary of the principles of good practice for the protection of children.

All Associations working with children and youth should...

- Promote the general welfare, health and personal development of children and protect them from harm of all kinds.

- Recognise that children have rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect.
- Raise awareness about what children are entitled to be protected from.
- Adopt and consistently apply a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.
- Plan an appropriate response procedure in relation to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- Establish links with parents and other relevant organisations.

National Council of YMCA's also support the Ethical Conduct for Youth Workers as highlighted in the [Ethical Code in Youthwork Document](#)

YMCA Ireland fully accepts young people's rights to self protection and:

- *To be safe*
- *To protect their own bodies*
- *To say NO –*
- *To get help against bullies –*
- *To tell*
- *To be believed*
- *Not to keep secrets*

3. YMCA Ireland Child Protection Procedures:

3.1 Recruitment, Selection and Management of Staff and Volunteers

For the well being and protection of programme participants all potential staff and volunteers must be vetted prior to their appointment or involvement in activities, in accordance with Garda E Vetting requirements.

In order to secure the suitability of staff, and volunteers/trainers the following process will be adhered to.

1. The role required of the person will be clearly defined and what is expected of the person established. Each potential worker (whether paid or unpaid) should

- be made fully aware of all duties pertaining to the appointment and their responsibilities as outlined in the YMCA Child protection Safeguarding Statement
2. Full appointment procedures should be carried out as recommended in the YMCA employment manual.
 3. Application/Registration - a form must be completed, and submitted, seeking detailed information on the individual including the names of two non-family referees, one of which should be from a previous employer.
 4. Declaration/[E Vetting procedures](#) - Staff who will have substantive access to children or who will act as a line manager /or have a supervisory role to other staff/volunteers who have substantive access to children must be vetted through the Garda E Vetting Procedures. (Please refer to YMCA Ireland Recruitment and Selection Policy and further notes highlighted below).
 5. International Volunteers – When involving international volunteers, two references, as well as a police check from their town of origin, are required prior to service. If necessary, independent translations of these documents must be sought, as well as evidence confirming the volunteers identity. International Volunteers are also required to complete the Declaration in [Reference form and International Volunteers Declaration](#) as well as to undergo [Garda E Vetting](#).
 6. All appointments should be sanctioned by the Chairperson of the National Executive Committee or National Secretary or in the case of locally managed centres, appointments should be sanctioned by the chair of the local advisory group or the General Secretary or equivalent staff member.
 7. Notes should be taken and filed appropriately at all meetings with regard to appointments, probation and work review.

Vetting Procedures

YMCA Ireland follows the appropriate [E Vetting Procedures](#).

Children First E-Learning Programme

<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme>

Once a staff member/volunteer has been appointed, it is required that they complete the Tusla E Learning programme prior to starting work, or immediately at induction along with familiarising themselves with the YMCA Child Safeguarding Statement. The certificate should be sent to the DLP. Staff and volunteers that have already completed the Tusla E Learning module within 3 years of commencing with YMCA can submit their Certificate to the DLP.

3.2 Effective Management of Staff and Volunteers

Induction

Child Safeguarding Statement– Each appointee will receive a copy of Child Safeguarding Statement, confirming their having read and understood the document, with Child Safeguarding training being provided as part of the induction process - [YMCA Ireland Induction Checklist](#)

Probationary/Trial Period

Probation period – A probation period of no less than 6 months will apply to all new appointees to ensure their suitability for the post, following which the line manager should review their suitability for the post.

Training

As part of its personnel policies YMCA Ireland is committed to ensuring that each staff member receives adequate training around Child Safeguarding issues

This shall take place in three ways.

- Firstly, each new member of staff as part of their induction, will receive access to a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement, and will be informed as to their own responsibility to this. Within YMCA Ireland, this will be carried out by the Designated Liaison Person. It is **required that the staff member complete the Tusla E Learning programme prior to starting work, or immediately at induction** along with familiarising themselves with the YMCA Child Safeguarding Statement. The certificate should be sent to the DLP. Staff and volunteers that have already completed the Tusla E Learning module within 3 years of commencing with YMCA can submit their Certificate to the DLP.
- Secondly, YMCA Ireland will facilitate on an annual basis, recognised Child Safeguarding Training (including CSE Awareness). Refresher training will be offered to both YMCA Ireland staff as well as to Local Association Staff every 2 years.
- Thirdly, bespoke training will be provided around specific child protection needs as they arise, either as a result of incidents or identified staff needs.

Support, Supervision and Annual Review.

All staff and volunteers will have appropriate support structures in place. This will include regular supervision either as an individual or as part of a team, as well as an annual review of duties known as a work review or job appraisal (Please refer to the YMCA Ireland Employee Handbook, and [Supervision Policy](#).) As part of this process staff will be given an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have about child safeguarding issues.

3.3 Reporting Concerns, disclosures and allegations

It is imperative that all staff and volunteers implement the following procedures to report a concern, disclosure or an allegation of child abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

The following link directs you to the [TUSLA website](#) to given current definitions

Within the youth work setting, staff and volunteers also need to be aware of the potential of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as a form of Sexual Abuse. CSE is when a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some type of sexual activity in return for something the child needs. This takes into consideration online grooming, peer exploitation and child sex trafficking. Abuse involving CSE should also be reported using the following guidelines.

What is a concern?

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or communication, favouritism or negligence are all examples of what may constitute a concern.

What is a disclosure?

A disclosure is when a child/young person tells someone that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may be physical, sexual emotional abuse, neglect or bullying.

What is an allegation?

An allegation occurs when a child, parent or other person reports specific unacceptable behaviour where a child/young person has been harmed or abuse in some way. Allegations must be reported to one of the organisation's Designated Liaison Person.

Reporting Procedures

Any disclosure, allegation or suspicion of abuse must be taken seriously, recorded, and reported to the DLP, who will decide the appropriate further action. The following Safeguarding Reporting Form may be used: [YMCA Child Safeguarding Incident Reporting Template](#) for internal purposes but when a formal referral is being made by the DLP then the appropriate [TUSLA Standard Reporting Form](#).

[If you are a mandated person you will need to make a report jointly with the DLP.](#) As a mandated person, you should be aware that the [legal obligations](#) under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rest with you and not with the DLP. If the DLP chooses not to make a report to Tusla then this must be given to you in writing. However, if you do not agree with this, you may in turn make the report yourself to Tusla.

Failure to follow the correct reporting procedures could result in disciplinary action.

Click here to see full details on [REPORTING MANDATED CONCERNS](#)

Click here to see [What is the threshold for making a mandated report?](#)

A full list of relevant offences against the child which are considered sexual abuse is set out in [Appendix 3 of Children First: Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#).

As all sexual abuse falls within the category of seriously affecting a child's health, welfare or development, you must submit all concerns about sexual abuse as a

mandated report to Tusla.

There is one exception, which deals with certain consensual sexual activity between teenagers, which is outlined here:

- The young person(s) concerned are between 15 and 17 years old
- The age difference between them is not more than 24 months
- There is no material difference in their maturity or capacity to consent
- The relationship between the people engaged in the sexual activity does not involve intimidation or exploitation of either person
- The young persons concerned state clearly that they do not want any information about the activity to be disclosed to Tusla

If you are satisfied that all of the above criteria are met, you are not required to make a report to Tusla.

What if my concern does not meet the threshold for a mandated report?

If your concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but you feel it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should report it to the DLP who will in turn report it to Tusla under Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children again this will be done through your DLP as a joint report.

If any member of staff, or volunteer is concerned or suspects that a child or young person has been abused it is important that evidence is given to the situation and followed up with immediate action.

In the first instance listen to the young person, collect relevant information, record and immediately inform the Designated Liaison Person. Please refer to [ROI Child Safeguarding reporting systems and dealing with allegations](#)

Where staff or volunteers employed in YMCA Ireland have cause for concern regarding possible abuse or neglect, or if a child or young person has made a disclosure to them, the following action should be taken:

- 1 **The member of staff concerned should -**
 - (i) maintain detailed and dated written records of all available information relating to the cause for concern or the disclosure and any subsequent action.
 - i. immediately notify in person the DLP. This notification is to be followed by written confirmation of the incident and details of all action taken.
 - ii. The Mandated/Non Mandated Person and the DLP should then decide whether or not to report the incident to Tusla using the Standard Reporting Form report or to an Garda Síochána.

Responding to incidents of alleged abuse is based upon clearly defined procedures

within YMCA Ireland which must be followed.

Role of Designated Liaison Person

Key responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person are to:

- Be responsible to the National Executive
- Has responsibility to the Office Bearers to encourage Local Associations within the YMCA to comply with the standards and practices outlined in this document.
- Has responsibility for updating information on relevant issues and monitoring the effectiveness of the Child Safeguarding Statement
- Maintains a network of contacts within outside authorities such as local Tusla / Gardai / fire authorities / education training boards / health services, ascertaining contact names and phone numbers and seeking appropriate advice when necessary from the appropriate Tusla team
- Has responsibility for ensuring that all new workers receive a copy of and understand the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 - Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided.
 - Receive and deal with all concerns of a child protection nature.
 - Make formal reports if necessary
 - Keep appropriate records and store them in a safe and confidential manner.
 - Has responsibility to carry out an Annual Audit of procedures.

Legal Obligations

Mandated Reporters

Mandated reporters are persons who, by virtue of their training, responsibilities and experience, should have an awareness of issues relating to child protection. These professionals either work with children or young people or they are in service sectors that encounter adults or families and children where there is risk of abuse and neglect. Mandated reporters will be required to report child abuse above a defined threshold which comes to their attention in the course of their professional or employment duties. They will also be required to report any direct disclosures of abuse from a child.

Obligations to assist the Child and Family Agency

Under the new legislation, mandated reporters may be required to cooperate with the Child and Family Agency, if requested, in relation to assessment by the Agency of child welfare and protection concerns arising from a mandated report.

4. YMCA Ireland Child Protection Guidelines

4.1 Code of Behaviour/Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been drawn up in order to support YMCA Ireland **Staff, and Volunteers** to inform their youth work, and protect them especially when working in isolation and vulnerable situations. This code of behaviour is a general guideline and each programme is required to have its own specific guidelines which are detailed also.

Staff and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to Equal Opportunities and to young people

- By being honest with, and showing respect for, young people.
- By respecting the confidentiality of the young person and by being clear and open when confidentiality cannot be maintained.
- By offering challenging and exciting experiences undertaken responsibly in a safe environment
- By recognising unacceptable behaviour and taking action, enables change to take place.

Staff and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to themselves and colleagues

- By being honest with, and showing respect for colleagues
- By respecting and keeping appropriate levels of confidentiality.
- By working and planning to the best of their ability within the constraints of their association, or allocated responsibilities.
- By only working alone when immediate support is available and /or the Health & Safety of the Young People is at Risk.
- By offering support to colleagues and seeking it when necessary.

Staff, and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to educate members, volunteers and staff

- By leading by example and setting good, positive role models:
- Not using language, which is racist, sectarian, sexist or abusive.
- Dressing appropriately to the occasion task, and company present.
- Drinking alcohol, or using other illegal substances whilst on duty and working with young people.
- By creating an environment within which young people can feel safe and learn.
- By enthusiastically seizing all learning opportunities either programmed or otherwise.
- By fully implementing the aims and objectives of YMCA Ireland.

Recommendations

All staff and volunteers need to be aware of the impact that their behaviour has on

young people. The trust required between adults and young people is fundamental to the work of the YMCA and should never be jeopardised.

In recognising the issues highlighted in the Code of Conduct, it is expected that all staff and volunteers will

- Respect everyone as an individual
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour
- Respect young people's rights to privacy
- Be available to listen and, if necessary, refer to more appropriate help
- Try to ensure that your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence and are acceptable within a relationship of Trust
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues
- Plan not to put yourself in a situation where you are alone with a child or young person
- Adhere to YMCA Ireland policies which can be found online on the Shared Policy Folder
- Be aware that you are accountable for your actions to the young people, their parents and YMCA Ireland.

Staff, and volunteers should **never**:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone on car journeys no matter how short.
- Take children to their home.
- Engage in inappropriate physical contact
- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay – apart from structured sports activities.
- Engage in sexually provocative games.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- On residential, sleep in a room with children, enter young persons' bedrooms, or allow young people to enter staff bedrooms.
- Establish relationships with participants that may have sexual overtones
- Deliberately place yourself or others in a compromising situation.

Please note the YMCA expects staff and volunteers to act with sensitivity and self control when working with all age groups. Those engaged in YMCA work need to recognise the issues of power and responsibility. It is YMCA practice that staff and volunteers do not misuse their role by taking advantage of participants of any age and establishing 'personal relationships'. Behaviour of all Staff, and Volunteers whilst on duty must, of course be within the Law (see [Ethical Conduct in youth work and Guidelines for Self Protection](#))

Sanctions:

Should a staff member or volunteer be in breach of this Code of Conduct, YMCA Ireland's disciplinary procedures, as outlined in the Staff Handbook will be activated

and followed.

4.2 Communication with young people, parents and others.

Use of Mobile Phones/email:

It is not appropriate for staff to hold the personal mobile phone numbers of young people, unless for Health and Safety reasons, for example when on residential. After such residential these contact numbers must be removed from any mobile phone used for work purposes.

Parental permission must be given to communicate directly with a young person via mobile phone or email. Texting or emailing young people directly should always take the form of a group text/email to all of the group members however, in circumstances where there may need to be an individual response, the communication must always be copied into another staff member and appropriate language should be used.

Sharing photos and/or videos

Parental permission must be sought before sharing photos or videos of young people on websites, social media networking sites or PR Materials.

Youth workers are advised to pay particular attention to the use of cameras and picture mobile phones and in some cases their use will not be permitted. Under no circumstances must photographs be taken without the consent of the group or on personal media/mobile devices.

Use of Social Media

With regard to the use of Social Media, YMCA Ireland has developed Social Media Guidelines which all staff and volunteers must adhere to when using social media as part of programme delivery or as a communication method with young people. These guidelines can be found on the YI-Resources site or by using the following link [YMCA Ireland Social Media Guidelines 2013](#)

Physical contact and special needs:

In circumstances where physical contact with a member is unavoidable it must be predetermined and take place with the member's permission. This means that:

- The way it is going to be done must be thought through, explained and understood.
- The member's permission must be obtained allowing the physical contact to be carried out in the agreed way.

NOTE: It may be sometimes necessary for staff and volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people in a local Association, particularly if they are young people with disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full

understanding and consent of the young person and the parents. In an emergency, parents should be fully informed.

In such circumstances it is important that you ensure that all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with utmost discretion.

Sharing Information:

- Where child protection concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child.
- Sharing information re child protection concern is not a breach of confidentiality
- Parents/guardian and children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and or a report is being made unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.

See information on [Interagency Work, Freedom of information and Data Retention](#)

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 do not prevent the sharing of information on a reasonable and proportionate basis for the purposes of child protection. Tusla has the authority to share information concerning a child who is the subject of a risk assessment with a mandated person who has been asked to provide assistance. Tusla must only share what is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case. Information that Tusla shares with you, if you are assisting it to carry out an assessment, must not be shared with a third party, unless Tusla considers it appropriate and authorises in writing that the information may be shared.

This is in keeping with the principles of data protection, which recognise that in certain circumstances information can be shared in the interests of child protection, but that such sharing must be necessary and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 makes it an offence for you to disclose information to a third party which has been shared by Tusla during the course of an assessment, unless Tusla has given you written authorisation to do so. If you fail to comply with this section, you may be liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to six months or both. This offence can also be applied to an organisation.

Written Information sought from parents

It is essential that YMCA's gain information relating to children in relation to membership and consent for activities, day trips, residentials and emergency situations. Any 'consent' that is provided must be from someone with parental responsibility and all YMCA's must inform those giving consent that it must be obtained from those with parental responsibility.

Parents should always be informed of the limits of confidentiality around their contact details and any information they provide to the YMCA.

Confidentiality

On the premise that the welfare of the child is paramount, considerations of confidentiality must not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm.

Staff, volunteers and participants must be aware that there are circumstances in which confidentiality must be broken, specifically if it is suspected that abuse has occurred and an offence committed.

On receipt of both a verbal and a written report on suspected abuse the Designated Liaison Person will refer to the appropriate authorities.

All staff and volunteers must be au fait with the referral procedure. An up to date summary statement of YMCA Ireland's Child Safeguarding Statement can be found in the staff Handbook.

Record Keeping

All staff and volunteers need to be aware of and follow the written procedures for keeping records such as:

- Attendance register
- Accident and incident books
- Consent forms
- Cause of concern forms

All records will be kept in compliance with the YMCA Ireland Data Protection policy and procedures.

Complaints and grievances

All staff, volunteers and participants must be aware of the organisations complaints procedures [YMCA Ireland Complaints Policy and Procedures 2015-2018](#).

Everyone has a right to complain or report a grievance, regardless of whether they are children, parents or staff/volunteers.

4.3 General Safety and Management of Activities

This Safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with the [YMCA Ireland Health and Safety Policy](#) which will outline in greater detail the processes and responsibilities with regard to Health and Safety matters in the organisation

General Safety

When an accident occurs, the danger must be removed immediately, the injured person treated, and the accident recorded on the agreed form.

A telephone should be accessible wherever a group meets.

Every leader should know how to access this facility. Notice of the nearest telephone

should be clearly displayed.

Emergency telephone numbers should be displayed prominently.

It is desirable that a trained First Aider be available within the staff team.

Professional help should be sought if and when the trained First Aider cannot help or if further assistance is required when the First Aider can do no more.

A first aid box should be provided at each location.

The worker in charge of the group must inform the General Secretary and/or the DLP of any accidents at the earliest possible opportunity.

The worker in charge of the group must ensure that the child's parent/guardian is immediately informed of the accident.

The worker in charge of the group must record all details of accidents in the Accident Book/Form and also obtain witness statements within 24 hrs.

Identify cause of the incident and prevent re-occurrence.

If an accident is serious, the DLP or the General Secretary should inform the insurance company named in the Accident Book as soon as possible.

Insurance

All children's and youth work activities should have professionally advised and adequate insurance cover to include key areas of: -

- Personal Accident
- Public Liability
- Property and Contents Insurance
- Vehicle Insurance

It is the responsibility of the activity organiser and YMCA General Secretary to ensure that all relevant insurance policies are currently valid.

In the case of activities or events which are considered 'high risk', the worker should consult with the DLP and/or the YMCA General Secretary who will decide on the access appropriateness and adequacy of the cover available.

No high-risk activity should be engaged upon without first following above procedure to ensure that the insurance cover provided is adequate.

Insurance cover for transportation of children/youths should be adhered to at all times

Premises

Staff and Volunteers can help ensure that activities and the environment that is being used for activities and programmes are safe, by identifying potential hazards and concerns

The premises used for all children's and youth work should be suitable and safe. This includes:

- Adequate provision of toileting facilities.

- Appropriate and adequate lighting. (Torches/night lights should be available for emergencies)
- Appropriate and adequate heating systems.
- Adequate provision of security and safety appliances.
- All fire exits and entrance and exit routes should be kept clear and marked for any situation.
- All keys to entrance/exit doorways should be easily accessed for emergency situations.
- All fire alarms and appliances should be installed following professional advice and maintained as advised. Workers should be trained in their use.
- All work/meeting areas should be marked with an 'Assembly Point' in the case of an emergency.
- No heating/cooking items, electrical appliances, or naked flames other than those tested and fitted to the venue by a professional should be used.

It is the responsibility of the YMCA to maintain the upkeep of the premises to a safe and suitable standard. However, the worker in charge has a responsibility to ensure that the procedures outlined in the YMCA Ireland Health and Safety policy are fulfilled.

Competency of Leaders

It is vital that all staff involved in activities and programmes have adequate training. All staff, volunteers and external trainers/facilitators will be expected to provide written documentation as proof of their required or necessary qualifications.

Safety of Equipment

All equipment used by a youth or children's group must be safe and suitable for use by the age range of the young people participating. Where a National Standard is applicable, the equipment should conform to it.

In addition

- All equipment should be thoroughly checked for defects before use.
- If there are defects the equipment should not be used.
- All defects must be reported to the activity organiser.
- All workers should be fully conversant with assembly and use of equipment.
- No child is to assist with the assembly of equipment.
- Use of all equipment must be monitored by a worker.
- Care should be taken that all paint, glue, felt tips, etc. are non-toxic.
- Safe storage should be provided for all equipment.

Supervision ratios

The level of supervision must be adequate and decided upon depending on the nature and venue of the activity as well as the age range of the children involved. Therefore when deciding how many staff and volunteers are required to supervise, leaders must take into consideration a range of practical measures.

- The number of participants in the group.
- The nature of the site /venue.
- The activities to be undertaken – if the activity is one of a hazardous nature e.g. mountain climbing

- It is important that each supervisor knows the responsibilities that they are expected to bear.
- It is recommended that no journeys/visits should be undertaken without a minimum of two volunteers in attendance.
- It is for the leader in charge to exercise their professional judgement in deciding the level of supervision, taking into account the guidance as stated above.
- Where a party consist of children of both sexes males and female supervision should be provided unless otherwise agreed.

Off – site Activities

All trips, camps and residentials must be thoroughly planned and documented well in advance and relevant information made accessible to all parties involved. The following procedures must be followed:

- Parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the arrangements for any trip to be taken outside of the normal venue.
- The worker in charge must obtain from parents their written consent to the participation of their child and a completed copy of the health form prior to departure.
- A copy of the trip information form should be forwarded to the DLP and/or the General Secretary.
- Copies of the consent and health forms must be forwarded to the DLP or held in the Local Association by an appropriate contact person.
- A detailed itinerary of the trip should be given to all the parents/guardians, workers and the DLP and/or the General Secretary at least 2 weeks in advance of departure (a pre-trip information night for all concerned would be an appropriate opportunity to present this information).

Residentials

When on residential the following recommendations should be adhered to alongside the procedures and recommendations outlined throughout this Statement

- Each residential should have at least two leaders-in-charge, preferably 1 male and 1 female with appropriate ratios having been considered as outlined previously.
- Leaders must ensure that males and females have different sleeping rooms. In exceptional circumstances workers must be sensitive to the needs of individuals and monitor the situation carefully.
- Young people participating should have their privacy respected by other participants eg rooms, changing rooms, showers, etc.
- Staff members (workers) must always use common sense and sensitivity and not leave themselves open to allegations of sexual misconduct. For example:
 - Do not enter rooms without permission
 - Do not enter changing rooms without permission
 - Do not enter showers without permission.
- Always knock or call out and ask permission to enter areas where people may be changing.
- Never put yourself in a position of being alone with vulnerable individuals eg cars, closed rooms, out of public view.

- Staff members (workers) should, when possible, ask another staff member (worker) to accompany them when entering rooms etc.
- Staff members or volunteers should not sleep alone in dorms with young people.
- When changing or when with a group that is changing - be discreet.
- If behaviour by one of the young people causes offence or is deemed inappropriate, it is the leaders responsibility to discuss and deal with this as soon as possible.
- Parental permission slips for under 18's and medical forms must be completed by all young people attending residential.
- Staff members and volunteers should use common sense and sensitivity around the areas of touching, hugging, etc.
- All staff and volunteers on residential will have undergone routine vetting.
- Prior to each residential, staff should meet as a group to discuss the implementation of these guidelines on the residential.

Review

This Statement will be reviewed at the September 2018 meeting of the Executive Committee. The committee will use the [National Executive/Advisory Groups Information/Requirements document](#) as the basis of this review. This will include an Annual review checklist of child protection, as well as an action plan for the year ahead.

Appendices and Templates for these reviews are as follows

[Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service](#)

[Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children](#)

[Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm](#)

[Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla](#)

[Procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons](#) and [legal obligations](#)

[Reporting Mandated Concerns](#)

[Procedure for appointing a relevant person](#)

[Reporting Mandated Concerns](#)

[Annual CP Review checklist](#)

[Child Protection Annual Action Plan](#)

All policies, procedures and Guidelines listed are available upon request.

Implementation: We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the policies, procedures and guidelines that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed at the National Executive meeting on an annual basis, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.