



## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

for

Dyspraxia Association of Ireland

trading as Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

Charity No. 1011659

Company No 269582

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**Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland**

**Charity No.:** 1011659 **Company No.:** 269582

**Related documents:** Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS), Data Protection Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Complaints Policy, Antbullying Policy, Volunteer Handbook.

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## 1) Policy Statement

Dyspraxia DCD Ireland is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people who engage with our services and activities, by protecting them from abuse and neglect and by promoting their rights to be heard, to participate and to be safe. This policy reflects Children First: National Guidance (2017), the Children First Act 2015 and current best practice from Tusla/HSE, including addenda on online safety (2019) and retrospective disclosures (2025). We will maintain and publish a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) and carry out a risk assessment of potential harm, reviewing at least every 24 months or sooner if there is a material change.

## 2. Scope & Definitions

**Scope.** This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, Board/committee members, interns, sessional facilitators, and any person acting on behalf of Dyspraxia DCD Ireland in programmes, events (in person or online), trips or overnight activities.

### Definitions.

- **Child/young person:** anyone under 18 years (excluding a person who is or has been married).
- **Child abuse** (neglect, emotional, physical, sexual), harm, reasonable grounds for concern, retrospective disclosures, as per Children First.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/childrenfirst/>

## 3. Legal & Standards Framework

This policy is guided by:

- Children First Act 2015 (statutory obligations incl. mandated reporting).
- Children First: National Guidance (2017) and Addenda: Online Safety (2019); Adult Retrospective Disclosures (2025).
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 (immunity for good faith reporters).
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016.
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (records and data rights).
- Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2nd ed.) (best practice).

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Board/Management

- Endorses and oversees implementation of this policy, CSS, and risk assessment; ensures adequate resources and annual review.

### 4.2 Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP

- **DLP** is the contact/resource for child protection concerns and ensures reporting procedures are followed promptly to Tusla; **Deputy DLP** acts in DLP's absence. Names and contact details are displayed in all venues and on our website.
- DLP consults with Tusla as needed, maintains secure records, and supports staff/volunteers involved in concerns.
- **Current DLP:** Sharon Lane, CEO, Dyspraxia DCD Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 8747085 Email: [sharon@dyspraxia.ie](mailto:sharon@dyspraxia.ie)
- **Deputy DLP:** Charlotte Murphy, Information, Communications and Management Strategist, Dyspraxia DCD Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 8747085 Email: [charlotte@dyspraxia.ie](mailto:charlotte@dyspraxia.ie)

#### 4.3 Mandated Persons (where applicable)

Under the Children First Act 2015, certain roles in our organisation may be classified as *mandated persons* (see Schedule 2 of the Act). If you are a mandated person, you have two legal duties:

1. Report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of harm to Tusla as soon as practicable, if the concern meets the statutory threshold.
2. Assist Tusla in its assessment of a child protection concern if requested.

Mandated persons can make a joint report with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), but the legal responsibility for reporting remains with the mandated person.

#### 4.4 All Staff/Volunteers

Everyone shares responsibility to recognise and report concerns; complete required training; follow this policy; and uphold the Code of Behaviour.

## 5. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis to protect the child.
- No promise of secrecy can be given.
- Parents/guardians are ordinarily informed of a report unless doing so places the child/young person or reporter at further risk or could impair Tusla/Gardaí assessment.
- Good faith reporters are protected from civil liability.
- Records are held securely and only accessible to authorised persons (see Section 20).

## 6. Code of Behaviour for Staff/Volunteers

Our child-centred code includes (not exhaustive): listening to children and young people; valuing diversity; involving children and young people in decisions appropriate to age/understanding; positive, strength-based practice. Physical contact should be in response to the child/young person's needs, appropriate, and in open settings, never for the adult's needs. Never use degrading language, corporal punishment, or language of a sexual nature. Avoid favouritism. Seek help if a situation may create risk (e.g., bathroom assistance, use the "two adults where practicable" principle).

Never: engage in rough/sexually suggestive games; allow inappropriate touching/language; ignore bullying or aggression. (See Antibullying, Section 10).

## 7. Parental/Guardian Involvement & Information Sharing

We will keep parents/guardians informed about programmes, trips, online activities, and obtain necessary consents (participation, images/media, transport). Where safe and appropriate, we inform them first if a concern arises—unless doing so may increase risk or interfere with an assessment (see Section 5).

## 8. Safe Recruitment & Garda Vetting

We operate robust safe recruitment, including clear role descriptions, application forms, face-to-face (or online) interviews, identity verification, reference checks, and Garda Vetting for any role involving relevant work with children and young people (staff and volunteers). All staff and volunteers are:

- Garda vetted via Dublin Volunteer Centre, managed by Garda Vetting Officer Charlotte Murphy.
- Reference checked and interviewed.
- No one commences relevant work until vetting clearance is confirmed
- Revetting occurs per best practice or when roles change materially.
- 

## 9. Training, Supervision & Support

- **Mandatory induction** on this policy and CSS for all staff/volunteers; role specific supervision.
- All relevant staff complete **Tusla “Introduction to Children First”** eLearning; DLP/DDLP complete DLP training. Refresh at least every 3 years or update.

## 10. Antibullying Code (incl. Cyberbullying)

We do not tolerate bullying (including online). We will: promote respectful behaviour; monitor environments (in person/online); respond promptly to reports; support all involved; and report to Tusla where bullying indicates welfare or protection concerns. We signpost relevant resources for children/parents and follow national guidance for online safety.

## 11. Safe Practices

### 11.1 Online/Remote Activities

When working online with young people, we follow good practice: use approved platforms; disable private chat between adult and child/young person; obtain parental consent; schedule sessions; record attendance; apply moderation rules; respond to online harms and signpost supports (e.g., Hotline.ie, Childline). Our CSS accounts for online risks as required by the 2019 addendum.

## **11.2 Images/Media & Social Media**

Obtain written consent (parents/guardians for under 18s) before capturing/using images or audio/video; set expectations for social media; avoid identifying information; never communicate privately with a child or young person from personal accounts. (Template in Appendix C).

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla - Child Safeguarding - A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_-_Child_Safeguarding_-_A_Guide_for_Policy,_Procedure_and_Practice.pdf)

## **11.3 Transport**

Avoid lone car journeys. If unavoidable (exceptional), obtain prior parental consent, inform a manager, maintain seatbelt use, and record the journey. Prefer group transport with two adults. (See Section 18).

## **12. Managing Challenging or Disruptive Behaviour**

Use deescalation, proactive support, and reasonable accommodations. Any physical intervention is a **last resort**, proportionate, time limited and recorded; parents are informed. Plan reasonable adjustments for young people with additional needs to ensure inclusion and safety.

## **13. Accidents & First Aid**

Administer first aid by trained staff; record all accidents/incidents; notify parents/guardians; review for learning; and escalate to statutory authorities if an accident indicates a safeguarding concern. (Accident/Incident Form—Appendix D).

## **14. Complaints Procedure (child safety)**

We provide a clear, child-friendly route to complaints; document and respond within stated timelines; and escalate any complaint indicating risk/harm via the reporting procedure. (Complaints Form - Appendix E).

## **15. Dealing with Disclosures by a Child/Young Person**

Listen; take it seriously; do not probe; explain you cannot keep secrets; reassure; record in the child/young person's words with date/time/signature; report promptly in line with Section 16. In immediate danger, contact Designated Liaison Person and/or An Garda Síochána.

## **16. Reporting Procedure (incl. mandated reporting & Tusla Portal)**

- **Step 1:** Any person with reasonable grounds for concern informs the DLP without delay (or Deputy DLP if DLP is unavailable). A mandated person must decide if the threshold of harm is met and, if so, make a mandated report to Tusla as soon as practicable, typically jointly with the DLP.
- **Step 2:** If you have immediate risk, contact Gardaí then submit a written report.
- **Step 3:** Submit a report via Tusla Web Portal (CPWRF / RARF as appropriate), or by registered post using the Tusla forms where portal use is not possible.
- **Out of hours:** Mandated reporters can contact Tusla's emergency out-of-hour social work service on **0818 776 315**. If you cannot reach Tusla and a child/young person is at immediate risk, contact Gardaí.
- **Three-day rule:** If you alert Tusla urgently by phone due to immediacy, you must submit the written mandated report within 3 days.
- DLP keeps secure records of all concerns, decisions, and reports.

## 17. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Treat all allegations seriously; separate safeguarding process (to protect children) from HR processes (to protect fair procedures).
- Immediate risk: take protective measures (e.g., temporary reassignment) while ensuring due process.
- DLP reports to Tusla/Gardaí as required; management follows disciplinary procedures and supports all parties. Maintain confidentiality and records.

## 18. Trips, Travel & Transport

- Parents/guardians transport and supervise their own child(ren) during day outings. There are no overnight activities provided.

## 19. Record-keeping & Data Protection

- Keep child/young person protection records (concerns, decisions, reports, communications) securely, separate from general files, with strict access control. Apply GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 principles (lawfulness, necessity, minimisation, security) and follow Tusla best practices on safeguarding records. Retention periods are defined in our Records Schedule taking account of legal and sector guidance.
- Staff, vetting, and training records retained per legislative requirements (e.g., Vetting Acts).

## 20. Policy Implementation, Monitoring & Review

- The CEO/DLP oversees implementation; managers monitor compliance (spot checks, supervision); annual report to the Board; annual policy review (or sooner if legislation/guidance changes or after any serious incident). Tusla's safeguarding guide is used as the review benchmark.

## Quick Reference Contacts

- **Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Current DLP:** Sharon Lane, CEO, Dyspraxia DCD Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 8747085 Email: [sharon@dyspraxia.ie](mailto:sharon@dyspraxia.ie)
- **Deputy DLP:** Charlotte Murphy, Information, Communications and Management Strategist, Dyspraxia DCD Ireland, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 8747085 Email: [charlotte@dyspraxia.ie](mailto:charlotte@dyspraxia.ie)
- **Tusla (Duty Social Work / Dedicated Contact Points):** See local area office; use **Tusla Web Portal** for reports. [\[tusla.ie\]](https://tusla.ie)
- **Tusla Out-of-hours (mandated): 0818 776 315.**
- **An Garda Síochána:** 999 / 112 (immediate danger).
- **Tusla/HSE eLearning (Children First; DLP module):** staff/volunteers must complete. [\[hse.ie\]](https://hse.ie), [\[tusla.ie\]](https://tusla.ie)

## Appendix A

### Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Acknowledgement Form

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

**Policy:** Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

#### Acknowledgement

I confirm that:

- I have received, read, and understood Dyspraxia DCD Ireland's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement.
- I agree to comply with the policy, including the Code of Behaviour, reporting procedures, and all safeguarding requirements.
- I understand my responsibility to protect children and young people from harm and to report any concerns or disclosures immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy DLP, in line with Children First guidelines.
- I understand that failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to statutory authorities.

**Employee/Volunteer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role/Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager/Coordinator Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

# Concern/Disclosure Recording Form

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

**Policy:** Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

## Section 1: Child/young person Details

- Child/young person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Reporter Details

- Name of Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_
- Role/Position: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date & Time of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Details of Concern/Disclosure

- Date & Time of Incident/Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Location: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Description of Concern or Disclosure (use child/young person's own words where possible):
  - Any Immediate Action Taken (e.g., first aid, reassurance):
- 

## Section 4: People Present

- Names of Others Present During Disclosure/Incident:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 5: Reporting Actions

- Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Informed: Yes / No
- Date & Time DLP Informed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mandated Person Involved: Yes / No
- Tusla Report Submitted: Yes / No
- Tusla Portal Reference Number (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- Garda Contacted (if immediate danger): Yes / No

**Section 6: Parent/Guardian Notification**

- Parent/Guardian Informed: Yes / No
- If No, Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 7: Signatures**

- Reporter Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- DLP Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Important:**

- Complete this form as soon as possible after the concern/disclosure.
- Do not promise secrecy, record facts only, not opinions.
- Store securely in line with GDPR and organisational policy.

*(Use Tusla's Web Portal for submission where possible; keep printed copy within 48 hours as per portal guidance.)*

# Images/Media Consent Form (Under18s)

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

**Purpose of Use** - Dyspraxia DCD Ireland occasionally takes photographs, video, or audio recordings during programmes and events for the following purposes:

- Sharing updates with parents/guardians
- Educational materials and resources
- Promotional use on our website, social media, and printed materials
- Reports to funders and stakeholders

## Storage & Duration

Images and recordings will be stored securely and used for up to 3 years unless consent is withdrawn earlier.

## Withdrawal Rights

You may withdraw consent at any time by contacting [info@dyspraxia.ie](mailto:info@dyspraxia.ie). Withdrawal will not affect prior lawful use.

## Consent Options (Please tick)

- I consent to photographs of my child/young person being taken and used for the purposes stated above.
- I consent to video recordings of my child/young person being taken and used for the purposes stated above.
- I consent to my child/young person's first name being used alongside images or recordings.
- I do not consent to any images or recordings of my child/young person being used.

## Child/young person's Details

- Child/young person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent/Guardian Details

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Data Protection:** All personal data will be processed in accordance with GDPR and Dyspraxia DCD Ireland's Data Protection Policy.

## Appendix D

# Accident/Incident Form

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

## Section 1: Child/young person Details

- Child/young \_\_\_\_\_ person's \_\_\_\_\_ Name:

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- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Incident Details

- Date & Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_
- Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Description of Incident (include what happened, how it occurred):

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## Section 3: First Aid / Immediate Action

- First Aid Given: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No
- Details of First Aid or Other Action Taken:

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## Section 4: Witnesses

- Names and Contact Details of Witnesses:

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## Section 5: Parent/Guardian Notification

- Parent/Guardian Informed: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No
- Date & Time Informed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Method (phone/in person): \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 6: Follow-Up

- Further Action Required:
  - Medical attention
  - Monitoring
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 7: Safeguarding Escalation**

- Does this incident raise a child/young person protection concern? Yes / No
- If yes, reported to DLP: Yes / No
- Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 8: Signatures**

- Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_
- Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Manager/DLP Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Important:**

- Complete this form immediately after the incident.
- Store securely in line with GDPR and organisational policy.
- If safeguarding concern identified, complete a Concern/Disclosure Form and follow reporting procedures.

## Appendix E

### Complaints Form (Child Safety)

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

#### Section 1: Complainant Details

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Role (Parent/Guardian/Child/young person/Volunteer/Staff):

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- Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 2: Child/young person Details (if relevant)

- Child/young person's Name:

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- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 3: Complaint Details

- Date & Time of Incident/Issue: \_\_\_\_\_
- Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Description of Complaint (please provide as much detail as possible):

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#### Section 4: People Involved

- Names of Staff/Volunteers Involved (if any):

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#### Section 5: Actions Taken

- Immediate Action Taken (if any):

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### **Section 6: Desired Outcome**

- What would you like to happen because of this complaint?

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### **Section 7: Signatures**

- Complainant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Received By (Staff/DLP): \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Important:**

- All complaints will be handled in line with Dyspraxia DCD Ireland's Complaints Procedure and Child Protection Policy.
- If the complaint indicates a child protection concern, it will be escalated immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and reported to Tusla/Gardaí as required.

## Appendix F

# Online Session Protocol

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

**Purpose:** To ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people during online programmes and activities.

### 1. Platform & Access

- Use only approved platforms (e.g., Zoom, Teams) with secure settings.
- Enable waiting room or equivalent feature to control entry.
- Sessions must be scheduled and communicated to parents/guardians in advance.
- Provide clear joining instructions to parents/guardians, not directly to children.

### 2. Supervision & Ratios

- Minimum of two vetted facilitators present in every online session.
- Parents/guardians should be aware of session times and encouraged to supervise.

### 3. Privacy & Security Settings

- Disable private chat between facilitators and participants.
- Screen sharing controlled by facilitators only.
- Recording disabled unless explicit parental consent is obtained.

### 4. Behaviour & Safeguarding Rules

- No one-to-one communication between facilitator and child/young person outside the group session.
- All participants must use appropriate language and behaviour.
- Facilitators will remove any participant who breaches rules and report concerns to the DLP.

### 5. Consent & Communication

- Obtain parental consent for participation and any recording or screenshots.
- Share safeguarding guidelines with parents before sessions.

### 6. Responding to Online Harm

- If a child/young person discloses harm during an online session, follow the Concern/Disclosure Reporting Procedure.
- Report any inappropriate behaviour or suspected grooming immediately to the DLP.

### 7. Data Protection

- Do not share session links publicly.
- Do not store recordings or screenshots without consent and secure storage.

## Appendix G

# Recruitment & Vetting Checklist

**Organisation:** Dyspraxia Association of Ireland t/a Dyspraxia DCD Ireland

**Candidate Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role/Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist

- Role Description Prepared
- Application Form Completed
- Interview Conducted
- Identity Verified (Photo ID checked and copied)
- References Checked (minimum two, including most recent employer/volunteer role)
- Garda Vetting Completed via Dublin Volunteer Centre (Managed by Garda Vetting Officer)
- Vetting Disclosure Received and Cleared
- Signed Acknowledgement of Child Protection Policy
- Induction Completed (includes safeguarding, code of behaviour, reporting procedures)
- Probation Period Agreed
- Training Logs Updated (Tusla Children First eLearning and other relevant training recorded).

**Recruitment Officer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_