

The Ellen Hutchins Festival Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name: The Ellen Hutchins Festival

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

The Ellen Hutchins Festival provides the following services / activities to children and young people:

Workshops, classes, mini sessions, walks, talks, exhibitions, trails, demonstrations and practical activities in botany, botanical art, art and crafts, science, biodiversity, microscope and hand lens use, nature, landscape and heritage.

Guiding Principles

Our organisation believes that the best interests of children and young people attending our activities are paramount.

The Ellen Hutchins Festival (EHF) has a commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of children and young people in our activities, including their right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and heard.

EHF seeks to ensure that no child or young person is disadvantaged or treated differently because of gender, social or ethnic background, family status, sexual orientation, religion or disability.

EHF seeks to empower, enlighten and delight the children and young people with whom we engage, and to create a safe environment in which learning can happen.

Our guiding principles are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and current legislation such as the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.

Our guiding principles apply to all freelancers, volunteers, committee members and students on placement within our organisation, all of whom must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

We will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

3. Risk Assessment for child safeguarding for arts and crafts sessions

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult while availing of our activities.

Personnel and activity:

Freelancers and volunteers acting as facilitators and helpers of art and crafts sessions, or sessions on microscope and hand lens use, spreading seaweed specimens, or other practical activities.

Sessions with contact time with an individual participant varying from 10 minutes to 2 hours. In almost all cases with a parent or guardian in attendance.

Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
1	Emotional distress/ abuse	Guidelines for facilitators and helpers on respectful and equal treatment of all participants; no unsupportive, abusive or threatening language; no favouritism. Challenging inappropriate language or behaviour from other participants.
2	Inappropriate physical contact	Guidelines on openness, avoiding one to one settings, awareness of potential misinterpretation of well intentioned contact, asking permission when physical help appropriate.
3	Opportunity for grooming or sexual abuse	Guidelines on openness and staying in the group setting. No physical contact as a game or 'horseplay' even in fun. No contact, including social media, with participants after the session.

4. Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against freelancers/volunteers/ students of a child availing of our service;

- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of freelancers, volunteers and students to work with children;
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of harm;
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons; (Note: at present, no mandated persons.)
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

The procedures listed are being reviewed /developed and will be ready before the activity /Festival takes place. They will be available upon request.

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed on 1st November 2020 and 1st November 2022 and is next due for review on 1st November 2024 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: _____ Co-Director, Ellen Hutchins Festival
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For queries, please contact, Madeline Hutchins, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.

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