

# Child Safeguarding

## Declaration of Guiding Principles

### Name of Organisation:

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University Concert Hall, Limerick

### Nature of Organisation:

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Established in 1993, University Concert Hall (UCH) is a 1,038 seat auditorium situated on the University of Limerick campus. Opened on September 18<sup>th</sup> 1993, by the then Taoiseach Mr Albert Reynolds T.D. and U.S. Ambassador Mrs Jean Kennedy Smith, it was the first purpose built concert hall in Ireland. The venue can be tailored to suit the needs of all genres of performance, including everything from Classical to Comedy and Panto to Pop.

Since its inception, UCH has hosted some of the biggest names in entertainment. UCH also actively engages with Limerick's wider community organisations and artists, including local primary and secondary schools, to promote and showcase their artistic endeavours while providing a professional platform for their performances.

UCH has nine permanent staff members, and approximately 50 part-time/casual staff.

### Nature of Services Provided to Children:

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UCH presents performances and workshops for and by children of all ages, and is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. Services provided to children include:

- UCH's annual Panto shows
- performances by schools and performing arts schools (facilitated by the schools on UCH premises)
- educational workshops such as song writing and filmmaking classes
- dance and theatre summer camps
- performances by children's choirs and performing groups
- concerts by children's choirs as part of the annual Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, which is organised and managed by UCH. Such concerts take place in UCH and in external venues.

UCH undertakes to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, *Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*, the *Children First Act 2015*, *Child Care Act 1991*, *Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998*, the *National Vetting Bureau (Children And Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016*, and the *Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People in the Arts Sector*, published by the Arts Council of Ireland.

## Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm:

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Below are UCH's principles and procedures which should be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while availing of our services both on our premises and off-site.

- All UCH staff, both permanent and part-time, who carry out relevant duties, are Garda vetted.
- UCH has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) to act as a liaison with outside agencies. The DLP will act as a resource to any member of UCH who has child safeguarding queries or concerns. The DLP will also be responsible for reporting suspicions or allegations of child abuse to Tusla/the Gardaí.
- Where the DLP is unavailable or unable to act for whatever reason, UCH shall nominate another member of UCH (Deputy DLP or other nominee) to assume the DLP's responsibilities.
- All UCH staff who carry out relevant duties undertake Tusla online Child Protection Training – Children First E-Learning. Several key staff members have completed a full day Children First, Child Protection training course facilitated by Barnardos.
- All child safeguarding or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.
- Children will be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.
- The protection of children will always come first.
- The safest possible practices will be adopted to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and to protect members of University Concert Hall from the necessity to take risks and leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- UCH endeavours to ensure that children are always accompanied by a parent, guardian, teacher or carer while in the venue.
- A child in need of personal support because of illness, physical needs or any form of distress, shall be referred in the first place to his/her parent/guardian or teacher. In the absence of a guardian, the staff member who is working with or supervising that activity will provide such support. Parent/guardian or teacher are requested to inform a member of staff if there are any specific needs required during a child's participation at a UCH event.

Our guiding principles apply to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/board members and students or others on work placement within our organisation. All committee/board members, staff, volunteers and students must abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

# Implementation of Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy

UCH's 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 UCH Child Safeguarding Statement supports our commitment to safeguarding children while they are on the UCH premises or availing of our services off-site, and contains details of the following procedures:

- 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;

UCH recognises that implementation of our Child Safeguarding Statement is an ongoing process. This Declaration and our Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, or as soon as practicably possible after there has been a significant change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signatories of this statement: Sinéad Hope (Director and Deputy Designated Liaison Person) and Marie Healy (Administration Manager and Designated Liaison Person)

## Name and contact details:

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The Relevant Person to contact about our Child Safeguarding Statement is:

Marie Healy  
Administration Manager  
University Concert Hall  
Foundation Building  
Castletroy  
Limerick  
Tel: 061 213304  
Email: [marie.healy@uch.ie](mailto:marie.healy@uch.ie)