

## Information on our Child Protection Policy for Parents/Guardians and Students

Here at Clare English Language School (CELS) we are committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. Children's welfare and safety is our top priority. We comply with Children First: National Guidelines for Child Protection and Welfare. To help us achieve this, we have a Child Protection Policy and Procedures which guides our work. Copies of our Child Protection Policy are available by request from Alan Williamson, who is the Course Director and also the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection and Welfare. The following information gives the essential information as to what is contained in the longer version of the Child Protection Policy of CELS.

- Parents/guardians are children's primary carers. We work in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure children's safety and enjoyment of the activities we offer. We ask you to take some time to read our guidelines and programme information. If you have any questions or concerns you can talk Alan Williamson, the Designated Person for Child Protection at CELS.
- Here are some questions you might want to ask:

### What is a child protection policy?

A child protection policy is a statement of the organisation's commitment to keep children and young people safe and to report any concerns about their welfare. The policy will contain procedures for how this is done in the organisation.

These include:

- ✓ A code of behaviour for staff
- ✓ A procedure for the safe recruitment of staff
- ✓ A Designated Liaison Person who deals with child protection issues
- ✓ Procedures for reporting concerns to the Child and Family Agency
- ✓ Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers
- ✓ A complaints policy
- ✓ An accidents and incidents reporting policy

### What should I expect from an activity or group my son or daughter takes part in?

- You can expect your son or daughter's safety and welfare to be the top priority.
- You have been informed, via the CELS website, about all activities the student is involved in.
- You have been asked, via the Booking Form, for important personal information, such as contact details and any health information which is relevant for your son or daughter.
- You can expect that staff or volunteers are carefully selected and suitable to work with children and young people.

### What does confidentiality mean?

- Confidentiality means that information in relation to you or your children will only be shared with people who 'need to know'.
- Personal information about your family will be treated with respect.

### Who does the organisation report to, if they have a child protection concern about a child or young person?

- If we have a child protection concern about a child we are obliged to report it to a Duty Social Worker in Tusla: The Child and Family Agency, or in an emergency, to An Garda Síochána (the Irish Police).

### What information will be passed on?

- We will pass on the child's name, address and age, your name and address and will say what the reason for the concern is.
- We will also include the name of the person making the report.
- Anyone making a report of suspected child abuse, provided they act 'reasonably and in good faith' will have immunity from civil liability (Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998).

### Do I have a right to see information about me or my child?

- Yes. You have a right to see any records that are kept about you or your children.

### Is there a code of behaviour for staff, children and young people, volunteers and Host Families?

- Yes. A code of behaviour for staff, volunteers and Host Families is part of our child protection policy.
- We have a code of behaviour for students.
- We have an anti-bullying policy.
- We also ask parents/guardians to comply with certain measures to ensure their children's safety (see below).

### Who can I talk to if I have a concern about a child?

- If you have a concern about a child or young person, you can talk to Alan Williamson, the Course Director and the Designate Liaison Person. Alan will listen to your concern and explain our Child Protection Policy to you.

### Is there a complaints policy? Who can I talk to if I have a complaint?

- Yes, we have a complaints policy.
- If you have a complaint you can talk or write to Alan Williamson. He will respond to your complaint within 15 working days.

### Does the organisation have a health and safety policy?

- Yes. All organisations are required by law to have a safety statement and a health and safety policy.

### What are your recruitment / selection procedures?

- All adult participants in CELS – tutors, workshop and excursion leaders, host families and other organisations are carefully selected and vetted to ensure students enjoy a safe, welcoming and enjoyable experience while participating in our courses.
- Garda Vetting is sought for all tutors and host families.
- All staff, volunteers and Host Families are asked to sign a declaration stating that they are suitable to work with children and young people and that they will abide by the organisation’s child protection policy.

**Does the organisation have a policy for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers?**

- Yes. Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, volunteers or Host Families are part of the child protection policy.

**Parents Co-operation**

**In order to help ensure children and young people’s safety and welfare we ask parents to:**

- ✓ Give us any relevant information (e.g. health, ability, emergency contact).
- ✓ Read all the information provided in the Final Details e-mail which is sent about two weeks before the course begins.
- ✓ Inform us of any sports or activities that your son or daughter should not do.
- ✓ Provide contact details and ensure your son or daughter has saved contact details of Alan Williamson in the phone they will be using while in Ireland (if they are carrying a mobile phone).

Should students, parents or host families have any concerns at any time, they should be reported to Alan without delay.

Copies of relevant policies are available on our website: [www.cels.ie](http://www.cels.ie) or any policy can be emailed on request.

**Any questions, queries or concerns can be addressed to Alan Williamson, Course Director.**