



## **Take2 Performing Arts School Child Protection Policy**

Take2 is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all the children and young people with whom our staff come into contact. Our policy on child protection is following “Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” . The principles of good practice for the protection for children and young people”. We are committed to promoting the rights of the child to be protected, be listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.

1 All employees, and volunteers of Take2, will be made aware of and be familiar with the childcare services child protection policy through an in-house induction.

The Designated Liaison Person (Pamela Hughes) acts as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions the Child and Family Agency Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

Take2 has put in place a standard reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, dealing with Child Protection and Welfare Concerns concerns or allegations of child abuse.

### **Reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse**

1. The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns about a child should bring them to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person immediately.

2. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or of risk to harm pending Tusla intervention.

3. Where the Designated Liaison Person considers that a child protection or welfare concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern criteria outlined below, then the Designated Liaison Person can refer to Tusla. Examples of reasonable grounds for concern are:

a specific indication from the child that he/she was abused

an account by the person who saw the child being abused

evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way

an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where corroborative indicators are supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this

would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.

Consistent indication over time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect. See Appendix 1 or also visit: FAQ on [www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/children-first](http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/children-first)

Where the Designated Liaison Person remains uncertain she should contact the Child and Family Agency Tusla for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.

The Designated Liaison Person will ensure that the parents/ carers are informed that a report/ referral had been made to Tusla. The Designated Liaison Person will make an appointment with parents to inform them that the report has been made to Tusla unless to do so would be likely to endanger the child.

After consultation with the Duty Social Worker, the Designated Liaison Person will then take one of two options

- a. Report the allegation, concern or disclosure to the relevant authority (e.g. Tusla, An Garda Síochána, etc.) using the standard reporting form from Children First and in the case of out of hours or immediate danger contact An Garda Síochána.
- b. In those cases where a childcare service decides not to report concerns to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the individual employee or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the childcare service is not taking such action. The employee or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to, the Tusla or An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 apply once they communicate 'reasonably and in good faith' (see Paragraph 3.10.1 of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children).

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the Designated Liaison Person must ensure that the priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child/ young person and that no child/ young person is ever left in a situation that could place a child/young person in immediate danger.

### **How to Make a Report**

If the report is concerning the safety and welfare of children / young people, the report should be made to the Designated Liaison Person inTake2 (Sophie Griffith).

### **Guiding principles to reporting child abuse**

The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority

Reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency Tusla, Local Health Office area where the child resides

A suspicion, which is not supported by an objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern

However, these suspicions should be recorded or noted internally by the Designated Liaison Person as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for the statutory child protection agency or An Garda Síochána.

Who can make a report to Take2

Reports can be made by:

Children / young people

Parents / guardians

Employees, volunteers of Take2

Other advocates on behalf of children / young people.

### **How to Handle a Report of Abuse by a Child / Young Person**

In the event of a child / young person disclosing an incident of abuse, this must be dealt with sensitively and professionally by the employee/volunteer involved. In such circumstances, the employee/volunteer should-

React calmly

Listen carefully and attentively, take the young person seriously

Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you

Do NOT promise to keep anything secret

Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions, this is not an interview, but rather receiving a disclosure from a child

Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood

Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser

Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record

Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures which will follow

Pass the information to the Designated Liaison Person, do not attempt to deal with the problem alone

Treat the information confidentially

### **Retrospective Disclosures by Adults**

Parents and staff who are working with children and young adults or who attend child protection training may disclose abuse which took place during their childhood. A disclosure of abuse by an adult which took place during their childhood must be noted or recorded.

In these cases, consideration must be given to the current risk to any child who may be in contact. If any risk is deemed to exist to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser, a report of the allegation should be made to the Child and Family Agency Tusla without delay. Investigation of disclosures by adult victims of past abuse frequently uncovers current incidents of abuse and is, therefore, an effective means of stopping the cycle of abuse.

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhoods. Such disclosures often come to light when adults attend counselling. It is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in such disclosures.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the Designated Liaison Person should report the allegation to the Child and Family Agency Tusla without delay.

### **Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**

Take2 wish to draw the attention of the staff and volunteers to this Act Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the HSE or An Garda Síochána. Section 3(1) of the Act states:

“A person who, apart from this section, would be so liable shall not be liable in damages in respect of the communication, whether in writing or otherwise, by him or her to an appropriate person of his or her opinion that—

A child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused

A child’s health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected, unless it is proved that he or she has not acted reasonably and in good faith in forming that opinion and communicating it to the appropriate person.

This protection applies to childcare services and individuals.

### **Identity of Designated Liaison Person**

The childcare service's nominated Designated Liaison Person is Pamela Hughes and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Pamela Hughes.

Take2 Performing Arts School. Tullow Hall. Brighton Road, Foxrock D18.

Postal Address: 28 Beechpark Road, Foxrock D18 W5K2. Take2 Mobile: 086 086 403 5884.

### **Role of the Designated Liaison Person**

The Designated Liaison Person in Take2 (Pamela Hughes) has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the child protection and welfare policy is promoted and implemented.

#### **The role of the Designated Liaison Person involves the following duties:**

To be familiar with "Children First", National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and "Our Duty to Care", the principles of good practice for the protection of children & young people and to have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the child protection and welfare policy.

Take2 PAS (Performing Arts School) DLP supports staff members who are dealing with/have dealt with a child protection concern or disclosure.

To receive reports of alleged/suspected or actual child abuse and act on these following the guidelines.

To ensure that training is provided for all new and existing staff in Take2 on the child protection policy.

We encourage all staff to undertake the Tusla online training with 'Children First' and their certificates should be emailed to the DLP & Director at Take2. <https://childrenfirstuniversal.hseland.ie/>

To build a working relationship with the Child and Family Agency Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other agencies, as appropriate.

To ensure that supports are put in place for the young person, employees or volunteers in cases of allegations being made.

To keep up to date and undertake relevant training on child protection policy and practice, to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of Take2 PAS policy and procedures in this area.

To review the Take2 PAS policy and procedures on child protection on an annual basis and amend as appropriate.

To ensure that systems are in place for recording and retaining all relevant documentation concerning child protection issues.

### **Confidentiality**

In matters of child abuse, an employee/volunteer should never promise to keep secret any information which is divulged. It should be explained to the child/young person that this information cannot be kept secret but only those who need to know to safeguard the child will be told.

It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies. The information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis which means sharing information with persons who need to know to safeguard a child/young person and is not a breach of confidentiality and the number of people that need to be informed should be kept to a minimum.

If an employee has any doubt as to whether a report should be made, he/she should consult with the Take2 Designated Liaison Person.

### **Record Keeping**

Under the Data Protection Act, every person has a right to establish the existence of personal data, to have access to any such data relating to him and to have inaccurate data rectified or erased.

Take2 Data Controller (Pamela Hughes) will ensure that data that is collected fairly, is accurate and up-to-date, is kept for lawful purposes and is not used or disclosed in any manner incompatible with those purposes. All data concerning child protection records collected must be stored safely and confidentially in a secure locked cabinet. Only the Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person will have access to this information in line with current GDPR.

### **Recruitment and Child Protection**

All advertisements, screening and recruitment for vacant posts within Take2 will reflect the childcare service's commitment to equality. We will ensure that interviewers conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way. Advertisements will be posted on the Take2 website & relevant social media pages. All applicants will be provided with:

Details on Take2 & A Job Description and Specification

A minimum of two references (one from the most recent employer) will be taken up followed by a telephone reference check using the Take2 Telephone Reference Check for same.

References should be in writing and no references from family or relatives will be accepted.

Successful candidates will be offered an annual Contract. They will invoice Take2 for their services & they are responsible for their tax returns & must state on their invoices that are doing so.

All employees' contracts will include signing up to Take2 Child Protection Policy.

Take2 will not employ, contract or involve as a volunteer, any person to work with children or young adults who have a criminal conviction for violent crime, sexual crime, drug-related offences, or any other offences deemed inappropriate concerning work with children.

All workers employed, contracted to work, or volunteering to work with children through Take2 will require Garda Vetting will be undertaken for all Take2 staff. Take2 engages the services of Create <https://www.create-ireland.ie/supports/vetting/>

Take2 staff provides monthly work reports to the Director. Informal Support & Supervision meetings take place as required. Informal Support & supervision is available to staff members as requested or as required. Full Team Meetings take place a minimum of twice per year.

Take2 staff undergoes an induction process including the Child Protection Policy.

Take2 Child Protection Policy will be rolled out to existing staff through an in-house training programme. On-going training will be provided following annual review or statutory/ guideline changes.

### **Allegations Against an Employee/Volunteer**

Upon receipt of an allegation, the Designated Liaison Person will notify the Director.

If an allegation is made against an employee, the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person in these situations there are two parts to the process, i.e. dealing with the allegation of abuse and dealing with the employee/volunteer. Where possible these two pieces should be dealt with by two different people.

Two different procedures are followed:

#### **1 The reporting procedure in respect of the child**

- a) The safety of the child is the priority of Take2 and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child and other children/young people are safe.
- b) The Designated Liaison Person will deal with the procedure involving the child/young person and the reporting to the Child and Family, Tusla.

#### **2 The procedure for dealing with the worker**

- a) The Designated Liaison Person and the Manager/Owner will work in close co-operation with each other and with the HSE and An Garda Siochana.
- b) If a formal report is being made, the Manager/Owner/ will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained. Furthermore, Take2 will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- c) The Manager/Owner/Committee Chairperson), will suspend the employee/volunteer. In the case where the worker is not suspended the level of supervision of the worker will be increased.
- d) The Manager/Owner will liaise closely with the HSE Children and Family Services/An Garda Siochana to ensure that the actions taken by the childcare service will not undermine or frustrate any investigations.
- e) The protective measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following:

suspension of duties of the person accused.

re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children / young people.

working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation or other measures as deemed appropriate.

Recruitment and Child Protection Guidelines for Management of Staff Allegations Against an Employee/Volunteer.

### **Complaints Procedure.**

Complaints may arise in response to:

An alleged breach of the code of behaviour by a worker/volunteer;

A particular practice issue

Perceived poor attitude of a worker/volunteer

A child/young person feeling unhappy about an incident or an event

A parent/guardian feeling unhappy about an incident or event involving their child

Dissatisfaction concerning an aspect of the service being provided.

Some complaints may need to be addressed through your procedure for responding to allegations of abuse against workers/volunteers.

Who can make a complaint?

It is important that everyone is aware of how to access the complaints procedure and that it is clear who can complain.

Take2 is open to receiving a complaint from a:

Parent/guardian

Child or young person

A staff member

Member of the public or others who may have a legitimate concern.

Note: Issues being raised by workers/volunteers or students on work placement should be brought to the attention of the director or teacher they are shadowing.

Processing a complaint. Take2 have clearly stated steps for responding to a complaint.



These include the naming of the individual responsible for responding to complaints and details of both verbal and written response processes.

Children and young people should not be restricted as to who they can complain to but should be made aware that they can approach a worker/volunteer of their choice.

All teachers/volunteers should know that they have a responsibility to assist a student/ client in making a complaint if required.

Complaints where possible will be resolved informally.

The complaints process contains guidance in respect of expected timescales for a response, have instruction on how feedback to the complainant should be provided and contain guidance on how the response to a complaint can be appealed if required.

Complaints should be recorded and all stages of the resolution process should be recorded.

### **Code of Behaviour**

All employees and volunteers Take2 must make themselves aware of good practice guidelines and must be familiar with the overall child protection policy

Parents of children involved with our work must be informed of our policy and procedures

Take2 has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (Pamela Hughes) to deal with any complaints or issues arising which concern the safety or welfare of any child / young person. This person is appropriately trained and familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation, concern or disclosure of child abuse

Take2 has put in place an **anti-bullying policy**. Take2 will not tolerate any bullying behaviour by children/young people or adults and will deal with any incidents immediately. Take2 has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, boisterous or disruptive behaviour. We are adamant that every student /client gets the opportunity to learn as much as possible in a fun and safe environment. Anyone breaching this policy will be asked to leave/ receive a strike. We have a strict 3 strike policy. The student and their parents/guardian will be told clearly by the director that they have received a strike. If a student has three strikes they will be expelled from Take2. Where bullying amounts to any form of abuse it will be treated as such and be recorded and reported as appropriate.

Take2 Staff show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of the children and young people

Take2 has put in place a complaints procedure.

Take2 respects and promotes the principles of equality and diversity and works with all children in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish Constitution and law and the UN Convention on

the Rights of the Child i.e. staff should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they ever tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.

Take2 will review its Child Protection Policy on a bi-annual basis. The next review will take place in 2027.

Date: 1/9/2024 Signed by Pamela Hughes. *Pamela Hughes*

Appendices:

### **Definition of Child Abuse.**

Child abuse is complicated and can take different forms, but usually consists of one or more of the following signs and symptoms:

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and or medical care. Code of Behaviour Definition of Child Abuse

*“The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected”. “Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation”.*

**Emotional abuse** is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child’s need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child’s behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning e.g. ‘anxious’ attachment, non-organic failure to thrive, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour.

Examples may include:

the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming

conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions

emotional unavailability of the Childs parent/carer

unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child

unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way

under- or over-protection of the child

failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development

use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures

exposure to domestic violence

exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

**Physical abuse** of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents. Physical abuse can involve

severe physical punishment

beating, slapping, hitting or kicking

pushing, shaking or throwing

pinching, biting, choking or hair pulling

terrorising with threats

observing violence

use of excessive force in handling

deliberate poisoning;

suffocation

fabricated/induced illness

allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when "a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others".

Examples of child sexual abuse include:

exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;

intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the sexual arousal or gratification;

masturbation in the presence of the child in an act of masturbation; sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal

sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts.

Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse

Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. Concerning child sexual abuse. It should be noted that, for criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

**Reckless Endangerment** is when a person having authority or control over a child or an abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

(a) Causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or

(b) Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence'.