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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(see separate document for Child Safeguarding Statement)

Coole Music & Arts Ltd. was established to give children and adults the possibility to learn, enjoy and create music through different instruments, choirs, orchestras, chamber music, creative musical projects, workshops, courses, public performances and recordings; and to give children and adults the possibility to learn, create and enjoy crafts, drama, puppetry, juggling, dance and all related art forms; and to create and perform shows where these art forms are combined.

In March, 2007, following the completion of a HSE Child Protection Course by faculty members, the Management Committee of Coole Music and Arts formulated a Child Protection Policy. The Policy was reviewed and updated in 2012/2013 and adopted by the Steering Group (Management Committee) in April 2013 and August 2016. As of June 2019, the Coole Music Steering Group comprises Annalisa Murphy, Geraldine Nolan, Thomas Baker, Carol Campbell, Caroline Piggott, Helen Hancock, Michael Roddy, Cate King, Paula Gallagher, Anna Eagleton and Pat Gaughan.

Child Protection Policy Statement

We, Coole Music & Arts Ltd., are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake 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*, published by the Department of Health and Children.

Our policy outlines:

1. A Definition of Child Abuse
2. Basis for Reporting to the HSE, Role of the DLP and contact details for the HSE and Garda Siochana
3. Agreed Reporting Procedures
 - a) Designated Liaison Person
 - b) Procedures in dealing with a disclosure/suspicion from a Child/Third Party
 - c) Procedures for reporting allegations against a Teacher/Supervisor
 - d) Procedures for informing Parents/Carers
4. Organisational Implications and Prevention of Child Abuse.
 - a) Garda Vetting
 - b) Induction of Teachers and Volunteers directly involved with supervising children
5. Code of Behaviour for Teachers/Supervisors
 - a) Teachers/Supervisors working with Coole Music
 - b) Teaching Children on a one-to-one basis
 - c) Inappropriate Behaviour
 - d) Children's Behaviour
 - e) Good Practice
 - f) Health and Safety
6. Confidentiality Statement
7. Recruitment of Teachers
8. Managing and Supervision of Teachers
9. Involvement of Primary Carers
10. Complaints and Comments

11. Accidents Procedures

This policy will be reviewed by every two years in January by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy DLP. Updated policies will be ratified by the CM Steering Group and the Teaching Faculty prior to publication.

1. Definition of Child Abuse

Child Abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

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, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific moment. Teachers/Supervisors must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child is being neglected.

Emotional Abuse: 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. A child may be affected by an event in his/her life and staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child's emotional needs are being neglected.

Physical Abuse: is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Teachers/Supervisors must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child may have been physically abused.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Teachers/Supervisors must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child may have been sexually abused.

2. Basis for Reporting to the HSE

The HSE should always be informed when a person has **reasonable grounds for concern** that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. With regard to emotional abuse and/or physical neglect, consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional neglect or physical neglect would constitute reasonable grounds for concern.

3. Agreed Reporting Procedures

Designated Liaison Person

Cool Music & Arts Ltd. has appointed School Administrator, **Sarah Fahy**, The Maples 33, Gort, Co. Galway (086) 3467245 as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and **Geraldine Nolan**, 16 Boland's Court, Gort, Co. Galway (086) 3124220 as the deputy DLP. The role of the DLP is to liaise with all relevant agencies, whether in seeking advice, reporting or in follow up consultations. The DLP shall manage the reporting of incidents to the relevant services. The DLP shall provide a written, typed summary of any incidents reported which should be completed on the same day as the incident is reported. Once the DLP is made aware of an incident, the Deputy DLP shall be informed so that a cross-check of procedures can take place. The DLP and Deputy DLP will decide who within the organisation needs to be informed. The role of the Deputy DLP shall be to assist in the reporting of incidents to the relevant services and to document same.

If informed by a member of the school community of a concern, the DLP should in the first instance seek advice by phone from a senior child care officer/social worker/manager/designated person employed by the Health Board. At this early stage all parties including the DLP may remain anonymous and there is no requirement on the DLP to disclose the names of any party including the name of the school or her own name. However, the DLP should note the name of any Health Board employee who gives advice. It is incumbent on the DLP to follow through on all advice from the Health Board. Written records should be kept of all phone calls and meetings.

The Standard Reporting Form is attached as Appendix B.

Contact Details for HSE:

Gort HSE Health Centre (091) 631 325
Loughrea HSE Health Centre (091) 847820
HSE Offices, Shantalla Road, Galway (091) 523122

Contact Details for An Garda Siochana

Gort is in the Galway Division and in Gort District.
Tel: 091 636400 (Public Office) Fax: +353 91 646425
(District Office)

Procedures in dealing with a disclosure/suspicion from a child/third party

- ^ Teachers/Supervisors who suspect child abuse/neglect should report their concerns to the DLP at the first instance and carefully record their observations over a period of time.
- ^ Disclosures of Child Abuse/neglect from a third party will be reported to the DLP. If a third party starts to tell a teacher about an alleged child abuse incident the teacher will ask them to speak to the DLP. If the person does not inform the DLP the teacher will do so.
- ^ Where a child discloses alleged abuse/neglect to a staff member, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. It is not the role of any Teacher/Supervisor or DLP to investigate an incident/allegation/suspicion. His/her role is to listen and record information. Great care must be taken not to abuse the child's trust. This should not be a formal interview.
- ^ Listen to the child
- ^ Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
- ^ Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- ^ Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- ^ Do not over-react
- ^ Confidentiality should be assured – explain that further help may have to be sought.
- ^ Record the discussion accurately noting: What, where and when?
- ^ Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries
- ^ Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate
- ^ Sign and date the record
- ^ Retain the record securely

Whether cases of abuse/neglect are suspected or confirmed, confidentiality will be respected. The information on individual cases will be restricted to the teacher(s) immediately involved with the child and will be on a *need to know* basis.

The DLP will record the incident. It is not the function of the teacher or the DLP to investigate the issue. If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.

Informal contact with the designated person in the HSE will be made, seeking advice as to whether a referral should be made. The DLP will be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. It is not necessary at this stage for the DLP to disclose his/her name or the name of the school. The advice given by the Health Board must be acted upon. If the advice is not to refer, the DLP will record this advice as the reason for non-referral. The chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed.

If the advice from the Health Board is to refer the case, the DLP will do so. However, prior to referring, the DLP will inform the parent of her intention to refer, unless this course of action is injurious to the child.

Following referral and the completion of the standard form, the school will have no further part to play in the investigation. If a case conference is required, the DLP may be invited to attend.

Procedures for Reporting Allegations against a Teacher/Supervisor:

Procedures followed are similar to those of a disclosure (see above)

- ^ The Teacher/Supervisor will be made aware of the allegation against him/her
- ^ The Teacher/Supervisor will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing and at a meeting of the Steering Group
- ^ The Steering Group will meet to review the allegation, giving due consideration to any advice given by the HSE and Gardaí
- ^ The Steering Group will consider placing the Teacher/Supervisor on leave pending the outcome of investigations by the HSE and Gardaí.

On conclusion of any investigation the Steering Group will then determine the next course of action.

Procedure for Informing Parents/Carers of Reports made to HSE

The procedure shall be that the DLP or Deputy DLP will seek advice from the HSE about how to inform parents on a case-by-case basis and will determine with the HSE who should take on that function and when/how it should be done, with due consideration for the welfare of the child.

4. Organisational Implications and Prevention of Child Abuse

Gáarda Vetting

All contract teachers and supervisors will be vetted by the Gáardaí. Vetting for individuals working with Coole Music is arranged through the National Youth Council of Ireland, via the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras. The organisation will follow the new national guidelines published in 2016 and all teachers and supervisors will be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau.

Induction of Teachers and Volunteers directly involved with supervision of children

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and relevant volunteers of this policy and the Children First Guidelines (1999).

5. Code of Behaviour for Teachers/Supervisors

Teachers/Supervisors working with Coole Music undertake to:

- ⤴ Treat all children and young people equally
- ⤴ Create an atmosphere of trust.
- ⤴ Listen to and respect children and young people
- ⤴ Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- ⤴ Use appropriate language
- ⤴ Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- ⤴ Offer constructive criticism when needed
- ⤴ Respect a child's or young person's personal space
- ⤴ Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
- ⤴ Lead by example
- ⤴ Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

Teaching children on a one-to-one basis

It is recognised that Coole Music Teachers, by the nature of their work, must teach children in individual sessions, typically with the classroom door closed to avoid noise distraction. As is good practice in all schools, classrooms in Gort Community School are all fitted with a glass partition. The nature of teaching a musical instrument generally requires that a teacher helps a child physically position their limbs correctly in holding/playing the instrument. Teachers are advised to let children know if they are using an incorrect position and to show them the correct position. This is standard practice within teaching, and teachers are advised to be respectful of a child's personal space as appropriate. Therefore, when physical contact is required, it is recommended that teachers explain to children why and talk it through simply, for example. 'I'm just going to move your fingers into the correct position on the fingerboard'.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Coole Music & Arts operates an open-door policy. All parents/carers are invited to attend lessons with their children. In the case of very young children, parents/carers are required to attend. While it is accepted that by the nature of their work Teachers must spend time alone with students, the following is recommended:

- ⤴ Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people;
- ⤴ Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language to be used.
- ⤴ Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- ⤴ Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- ⤴ Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people;

- ⤴ Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

Children's Behaviour

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature the teacher/supervisor will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

The General Conditions of the Coole Music Registration/Membership form outlines the code of behaviour students are expected to adhere to. Parents are asked to sign that they have read the General Conditions in order to enrol their child in the school. At the beginning of each term students are reminded of the codes of behaviour expected in the school. If problems arise, more detailed discussions will take place with the children involved and their parents. A roster for Parental supervision of group activities is always in place. This assists in the management of any difficulties.

General Recommendations within Coole Music with regard to Good Practice:

- ⤴ Commencing in January 2013, Child protection will be a standing item on the agenda for the Steering Group
- ⤴ Contact details for the DLP and Deputy DLP are to be included in 'Coole Notes', the bi-annual newsletter of Coole Music & Arts.
- ⤴ A copy of what constitutes reasonable grounds for concern from the *National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* to be distributed to all teachers at commencement of term.
- ⤴ Administrator/Designated Person: Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact) – copies of relevant information to be given to teachers for use in the classroom. This is confidential information and should be treated accordingly.
- ⤴ Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures. In case of emergency, Coole Music teachers are to follow procedures of the Gort Community School.
- ⤴ Teachers/Administrator: Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;
- ⤴ Teachers: Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures;
- ⤴ Teachers/Administrator: Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- ⤴ Management Committee: Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- ⤴ Teachers: Report and record any incidents and accidents to the Designated Person;
- ⤴ Management Committee: Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- ⤴ Designated Person: Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- ⤴ Teachers/Administrator: Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved.
- ⤴ Teachers are asked to avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed;
- ⤴ Teachers are asked to maintain awareness around language and comments made. If something is said that may have caused offense or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Health and Safety

It is recommended that Teachers:

- ⤴ Do not leave children unattended or unsupervised.
- ⤴ Manage any dangerous materials in the classroom;
- ⤴ Provide a safe environment;
- ⤴ Be aware of accident procedures in the School and follow accordingly.

6. Confidentiality Statement

We in Coole Music & Arts are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- ⤴ Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- ⤴ Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- ⤴ We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;

- ⤴ Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- ⤴ Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances). Permission to use images of children engaged in Coole Music activities is sought at the time of registration.
- ⤴ Information/notes/reports regarding any child protection issues will be stored in a locked cabinet at the office of the DLP, in hard copy only. Hard copies will be retained indefinitely. No electronic copies will be maintained.

7. Recruiting and Selecting Teachers

Coole Music & Arts does not directly employ teachers, but contracts with self-employed individuals for the provision of teaching services. As the majority of teachers associated with Coole Music were contracted with prior to the establishment of our Child Protection Policy, it is our intention that these Teachers be asked to provide a signed declaration that they do not have any child-related convictions or are concealing any information on suitability for working with children.

Additionally, in the future, Coole Music & Arts will require that new teachers provide recent written references that can be checked and sign a declaration form that they have not have any child-related convictions, insufficient documentary evidence of identification or are concealing any information on suitability for working with children (See Appendix 1).

8. Managing and Supervising Teachers

Teachers work under the Direction of Katharina Baker, Principal of Coole Music & Arts. All teachers to be provided with a copy of our Child Protection Policy and to sign a declaration that they agree to abide by the policy.

Additionally, teachers are expected to attend an annual meeting with the Director, Katharina Baker, to discuss teaching techniques, roles, responsibilities, plans for the year ahead, etc. All new teachers are expected to participate in Child Protection Training. This is to be facilitated by the Designated Liaison Person.

9. Involvement of Primary Carers

We undertake to:

- ⤴ Advise parents/primary carers of our child protection policy through our semi-annual newsletter;
- ⤴ Inform primary carers of all activities and potential activities;
- ⤴ Issue contact/consent forms where relevant;
- ⤴ Comply with health and safety practices;
- ⤴ Adhere to our recruitment guidelines;
- ⤴ Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate;
- ⤴ Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate.

10. Complaints and Comments Procedures

Complaints or comments will be responded to in writing within 4 weeks;

- ⤴ Fiona Buckley has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- ⤴ Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to, but it is preferred to have complaints in writing.

11. Accidents Procedures

- ⤴ Coole Music & Arts will maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation;
- ⤴ First-aid boxes are available in the Staff Room at Gort Community School.
- ⤴ Incidents must be reported to Fiona Buckley who will maintain an incident log.
- ⤴ Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.
- ⤴ Barry Kavanagh and Helen Hancock are responsible for generating a safety statement in respect of group events/activities.



APPENDIX 1

Declaration Form – Confidential

Declaration form for all those working with children and young people.

Surname: _____ **First Name:** _____

DOB: _____ **Place of Birth:** _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

Any other name(s) previously known as: _____

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people? Yes o No o

If yes, please outline the reason below and provide details for verification: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? Yes o No o

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____