



## Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

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## **Policy Statement**

Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality is opposed to all forms of child and vulnerable adult abuse and neglect and believes that children and/or Vulnerable Adults have a right to be brought up in an environment free from any harm or neglect and which is completely supportive of their development. Smashing Times strongly advocates for the introduction of mandatory reporting of child and/or Vulnerable Adult abuse. Smashing Times staff are required to report any concerns about child and/or Vulnerable Adult abuse or neglect according to Smashing Times procedures.

## **Reasons for this Policy**

- The welfare of children and Vulnerable Adults is of paramount importance.
- All children and Vulnerable Adults have a right to be protected from abuse or neglect.
- Unfortunately some children and Vulnerable Adults in Ireland today are subject to abuse and neglect.
- Smashing Times as an organisation, is responsible for providing staff with a policy and procedures to support the recognition of child and Vulnerable Adult abuse and neglect and to ensure the appropriate action is taken where recognition has occurred.

## **Reasons for Smashing Times Mandatory Reporting Policy**

- Mandatory reporting would provide a clearer legal framework within which professionals will be obliged to operate.
- The elements of discretion would be removed and reporters who may be reluctant to report cases will be able to do so with the support of the law.
- Mandatory reporting would be a clear and unambiguous statement that child or Vulnerable Adult abuse is a matter of public importance and that all necessary steps should be taken to ensure that suspected cases of abuse are reported and acted on.

## **Smashing Times staff who Must Observe this Policy**

- Board members
- Manager
- Youth Workers
- Drama/Artist Facilitators
- Counsellors
- Tutors
- Panel and committee members
- Volunteers, Interns and Trainees

## **Implementation**

### **Staff**

The successful implementation of this Policy requires the commitment of staff at all levels within the organisation.

The company Manager and, in their absence, the Artistic Director is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

Each member of Smashing Times staff is required to implement this policy with their area of responsibility. The manager is responsible for ensuring that all new staff, tutors, artist facilitators, students, volunteers, trainees, interns and panel/committee members are made aware of the requirements of this Policy in the course of their induction programme.

Managers will make direct reference to the policy and procedures when discussing a child or Vulnerable Adult protection concern.

All staff working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to adequate support. This support takes the form of regular training, supervision, and the opportunity to discuss concerns with the manager and or artistic director.

All other staff and committee members are required to adhere to this policy and ensure its implementation in their work practices.

When working in a school environment it is important that the class teacher remains in the class at all times.

### **Responsibilities**

Smashing Times has a responsibility to provide ongoing support, guidance and training towards the implementation of this Policy.

Each individual board member, manager, tutor, artist facilitator, intern, volunteer, trainee, panel and committee member has the responsibility to take advantage of the support, guidance and training offered.

Where any board member, staff, manager, tutor, artist facilitator, volunteer, intern, panel or committee member becomes aware of an act of non-compliance with this Policy, they have a responsibility to address the issue with the person concerned and if there is not a satisfactory outcome to bring it to the attention of the relevant manager.

Drama and artist facilitators and tutors should identify a designated person in each host organisation who they can report any concerns they might have related to child and/or Vulnerable Adult protection.

## **Practice Guidelines**

The practice guidelines serve to support best practice in child and Vulnerable Adult protection work.

The practice guidelines are divided into the following sections:

1. Practice Principals
2. Interagency Roles and Responsibilities
3. Working with Children or vulnerable adults
4. Staff responsibilities when child and vulnerable adult protection concern arises.
5. Confidentiality, record keeping and retention
6. Agency involvement
7. Actions to be taken when an allegation is made against a Smashing Times employee.

### **1. Practice Principals**

The following principles underpin Smashing Times overall child and Vulnerable Adult protection policy.

The welfare of the children and Vulnerable Adults is of paramount importance.

Where there is a conflict of interest between the needs and rights of children and Vulnerable Adults and the needs and rights of parents/carers the child and Vulnerable Adult's needs and rights will be paramount.

Early intervention is desirable when working with children, vulnerable adults, families and their communities, and such interventions may prevent welfare concerns or harm happening to children at a later stage.

Families have the right to be consulted and respected in relation to their child or Vulnerable Adults welfare.

Children and Vulnerable Adults who attended workshops or performances run by Smashing Times Theatre have the right to be protected, kept safe, treated with respect listened to, and to have their views taken into consideration.

We will respect confidentiality of information entrusted to us but will not treat as confidential information which needs to be shared to protect children and Vulnerable Adults.

We are committed to working collaboratively with all agencies and disciplines concerned with the protection and welfare of children and Vulnerable Adults.

## 2. Interagency Roles and Responsibilities

Best practice indicates that all work with vulnerable children, young people and Vulnerable Adults should be subject to an interagency agreement where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

The Health Board has overall responsibility for the assessment and management of child and Vulnerable Adult protection concerns.

The Gardai have responsibility for the investigation of alleged criminal offences.

As a Company without statutory responsibility, it is crucial that we inform the school, community group or agency in which we are working, of any child and Vulnerable Adult protection concerns we might have.

## 3. Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

Smashing Times is committed to developing the artistic and creativity in children and Vulnerable Adults and provides an environment where they can speak freely to staff about concerns they might have. We do this by:

Always treating children and Vulnerable Adults with respect, dignity and sensitivity and respecting their right to privacy.

Taking time to listen to children, young people and Vulnerable Adults.

Helping children, young people and Vulnerable Adults to understand rules about acceptable behaviour that apply within our work.

Promoting a safe, fun space for the child or Vulnerable Adult to relax and be comfortable with their environment.

Building a relationship in which the child or Vulnerable Adult can learn to trust and respect adults and which recognizes the difference between confidentiality and secrecy.

Enabling children or Vulnerable Adults to freely express their feelings, fears and experiences openly and without fear of retribution or sanction.

Never using physical chastisement, verbally abusive language, sexually suggestive or motivated actions or language, or emotionally abusive conduct towards a child or Vulnerable Adult.

Encouraging children, young people and Vulnerable Adults to report things they are uncomfortable about, things they do not like happening to them or things that threaten them in some way.

Understanding that whilst all children and Vulnerable Adults need to receive and show affection that any physical contact is initiated by the child or Vulnerable Adult, is safe for both the child or Vulnerable Adult and the staff member and is age appropriate.

Being alert, open to and accepting of the possibility of abuse or neglect.

Being familiar with the identification of child or Vulnerable Adult neglect or abuse and able to effectively implement these procedures efficiently and in a timely and professional manner.

Recognizing that dealing with child or Vulnerable Adult protection can be distressing, knowing one's own limitations in dealing with it and having the awareness to be able to source support, supervision or assistance if necessary.

When developing online workshops for children or vulnerable adults the following will be considered:

1. The overall theme – is it age appropriate?
2. Violence and Gore – are imagery, discussions, or activities in the workshop overly violent for the age group of the participants?
3. Sexual content and Nudity – does the workshop contain or reference inappropriate sexual content or nudity?
4. Inappropriate language – does the workshop contain, or the facilitator use, inappropriate language?
5. Risky and Unhealthy behaviour – does the workshops highlight, reference or encourage risky or unhealthy behaviour? Children are likely to copy such behaviour.

The following factors will also be considered:

Content – children under 8 can often perceive imaginary content as real

- What subtle messages does the workshop promote?
- What commercial/political messages does the workshop promote?

Group size – The younger the participants, the smaller the group should be

Group mix – Group children by age

Older groups – If dealing with complex or serious topics, it may be easier to divide the group by gender

When communicating with children or vulnerable adults, the following should be considered:

- Comply with the framework of relevant legislation & regulations
- Report, where appropriate, incidents/matters regarding student welfare/protection
- Ensure children do not knowingly access/download inappropriate, illicit materials/images while engaged in learning activities
- Do not practise while under the influence of any substance: impairs fitness to teach
- All communication should be appropriate, professional & adhere to current policies

Before using a communication tool:

- Check the school policy
- Age restrictions
- Terms of service
- Appropriateness of service
- Only use school authorised platforms and services

**Do not engage in communications with children via social media.**

Before a workshop with Children or vulnerable adults:

- Familiarise yourself with the software functions
- Check permissions & privacy settings: comments/sharing/communication between participants
- TIP: Check for changes following version updates
- Be mindful of own background (video/audio)
- Enable / disable user audio & video cameras as needed
- Ensure parental/guardian consent for participation in the workshop has been given
- Tell all participants to contact the facilitator via their school/community group representative if they want to ask the facilitator a question after the workshop has ended

During a workshop:

- Set clear expectations & behaviour for students when engaging in online learning
- Establish rules of the game: ground rules (behaviour, anti-bullying)
- Moderate & supervise sessions – disable/enable cameras/audio?
- Ensure students are made aware of what they can do if they encounter something inappropriate or upsetting online
- Model behaviour

#### 4. Staff responsibilities – when child or Vulnerable Adult protection concern arises.

When a child or Vulnerable Adult discloses abuse to a staff member they need to:

Receive: Listen to what the child or Vulnerable Adult is saying

Reassure: Children or vulnerable adults who disclose abuse need to be reassured that the alleged abuse or neglect is not their fault.

React: Staff should react to the child or Vulnerable Adult only as far as is necessary for them to establish whether there are grounds for reasonably believing that the child or Vulnerable Adult is being ill-treated, abused or neglected.

Reasonable grounds for concern:

A specific indication from the child or Vulnerable Adult that they have been or are being abused or neglected.

A Staff member actually witnessing the abuse or neglect of a child or Vulnerable Adult.

An account of a third party of having witnessed the child or Vulnerable Adult being abused

Specific evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with a child or Vulnerable Adult being abused and is unlikely to have been caused by other means.

Accumulative indications, observed over time that a child or Vulnerable Adult is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

An injury or behaviour, which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation, but where there are collaborative indicators supporting the concern that it might be a case of abuse. For example, patterns of injuries implausible or contradictory explanations.

## 5. Confidentiality, Record-keeping and Retention

Undertaking a comprehensive assessment or investigative interview is the responsibility of the staff in the host organisation – school, community centre, youth centre etc., not the staff of Smashing Times and all persons involved will treat the matter in the strictest of confidence.

**Record:** An essential part of the disclosure process is to ensure that staff take notes of what the child or Vulnerable Adult says, in the child or Vulnerable Adult's own words immediately after the conversation with the child or Vulnerable Adult and that such records are dated and signed by the staff member.

**Refer:** The staff member must refer this information to the liaison person in the school, community group or youth centre and record when and to whom they have passed on the information.

**Relax:** It is important to remember that dealing with child or Vulnerable Adult disclosures of neglect and abuse is stressful and can have an impact on one's emotional well-being. Therefore, staff should actively seek out support from peers and the manager of Smashing Times Theatre Company.

**Designated Liaison Person:** Having identified a designated liaison person in the host organisation (school, community centre, youth centre) prior to commencing work, they should be contacted regarding the disclosure or concern regarding child or Vulnerable Adult protection. The manager at Smashing Times Theatre should also be made aware of the disclosure or concern.

## 6. Agency Involvement

Smashing Times understands that under no circumstance should a child be left in a situation that exposes her or him to harm, and will, in out-of-hours or emergency cases, if they think a child is in immediate danger and cannot reach a duty social worker, contact the Gardaí on 999/112.

### Procedure for Making A Formal Referral to the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency

If you identify a child as being at risk of harm – you must act. Paragraph 3.7.3 of: National Guidance (2017) states that "it is the responsibility of all agencies working with children and for the public to recognise child protection concerns and share those with the agencies responsible for assessing or investigating them, not to determine whether the child protection concerns are evidenced or not."

### Protocol for Agency Involvement:

In the first instance, telephone contact with the Duty Social Worker, or if out-of-hours or in an emergency, with the Gardaí.



The following procedures should be followed:

The Designated Liaison Person should make a referral to the Tusla, the Child and Family

Agency by using the Standard Report Form. Smashing Times Designated Liaison Person is Niamh Clowry.

The Standard Report Form can be accessed directly from the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency at <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms>

If Smashing Times believe the concern is urgent and that there is imminent risk to a child, they will make the report by telephone and then follow it up with the completed form. The quality of the information Smashing Times provide will influence the ability of the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency to respond.

The completed Standard Reporting Form must contain as much of the following as possible:

Accurate identifying information – including all known full names and surnames, addresses, date of birth, age, name of the child’s school, disability if applicable, ethnicity, first language (need for interpreter, if known) of the child(ren) and all the known members of his or her family and other adults living in the household. In cases of suspected abuse and neglect, family members should not be used as interpreters.

The report should also include:

Names and addresses of the parents/carers of the child

The relationship to the child of the person making the report

The name, address and details of the person allegedly causing concern in relation to the child or children

The names and addresses of other personnel or agencies involved with the child or children, e.g. GP, social worker, public health nurse, Gardaí, etc.

Details of the concern, allegation or incident – outline the exact nature of the concern: include dates, times and names of persons present. It is important to describe any observed injuries or behaviours that may be linked to the incident. In cases where neglect or abuse is indicated over time, the reporter should be encouraged to provide a chronology of the evidence or symptoms in the child that gave rise to the concern. The report should include the name and contact details of the person reporting the concerns and whether that person is a professional, a person working with children or a member of the public.

Views of the parent/carer and views of the child (where age appropriate) – the reporter must provide any accounts of the parents’ or child’s views about the concern that are known to them.

Any other relevant information

A copy will be kept for Smashing Times records and the original sent to the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

7. Action to be taken when an allegation is made against a worker/volunteer/student within Smashing Times Company.

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, there are two procedures that Smashing Times will put in place:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person
- The procedure for dealing with the staff member/volunteer

These procedures, according to Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against a staff member or volunteer. In this situation, Smashing Times must have due regard for the rights and interest of the child on one hand and those of the person against whom the allegation is made on the other hand.

The Managing Director of Smashing Times, Freda Manweiler, will deal with the staff member/volunteer in question, while the Designated Liaison Person, Niamh Clowry, will have the responsibility of dealing with reporting the issue and supporting the child. Staff members and volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations; therefore, any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff as well as the child, including counselling where necessary. The primary goal, however, is to protect the child while taking care to treat the staff member/volunteer fairly.

When the Smashing Times Managing Director becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a staff member or volunteer, he will inform that person of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation

The staff member/volunteer will be afforded the opportunity to respond. The Managing Director will note the response and pass on the information if and when a formal report is made to the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

It is important to note that The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 applies equally to organisations provided they report the matter “reasonably and in good faith.”

Smashing Times accepts the possibility that a number of factors may have a bearing on the organisation and will need to be considered:

- Possible reactions of other members of staff/volunteers, including anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, shock, guilt, anxiety and confusion.
- The effects on the alleged abuser of the internal disciplinary proceedings, the child protection investigation and the criminal investigation.
- The reactions of other staff/volunteers and other children/young people towards the child/young person who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated.
- The reaction of parents/carers and other family members of the child/young person.

Note: Should an allegation be made against the Managing Director of the company, the Chair of the Board will deal all aspects of the situation.

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following steps will be taken:

The Managing Director of Smashing Times will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the staff member/volunteer. It may be necessary for the Managing Director to seek legal advice for any action following an allegation against a staff member/volunteer. A meeting may need to be arranged with the Tusla or the Gardaí to discuss the allegation.

The allegation will be assessed by the Designated Liaison Person to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities at that point. The Designated Liaison Person may wish to contact the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency for advice on the issue.

The safety of the child/young person is the first priority of Smashing Times and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child/young person is safe. The measures taken will be proportionate to the level of risk.

Smashing Times will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/carers as appropriate.

Pending the outcome of the investigation by the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and/or the Gardaí, the 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 (with pay in the case of a staff member), 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.

Smashing Times will notify the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The staff member/volunteer has a right to respond to this and the response should be documented and retained.

Smashing Times will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.

Smashing Times will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and any decisions taken on action in regard to the staff member/volunteer will be taken in consultation with these agencies.

The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this period and Smashing Times will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.

Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

## **Organisational Commitments – Supporting Staff**

Smashing Times Company is committed to ensuring that all reasonable efforts are taken in promoting a work environment and staff team that promotes the welfare of children and Vulnerable Adults who are users of our services, and to ensure that all efforts are made in preventing adults being engaged as staff

where there is a concern that they pose a known or perceived risk to children and vulnerable adults.

We recognise however that there exists a potential that a staff member, student or volunteer might abuse, ill-treat or neglect children or Vulnerable Adults in our services, and in such situations, the welfare of the child or Vulnerable Adult is our paramount consideration.

We are committed to ensuring that our procedures for such scenarios are based firmly on the rules of natural justice, will be implemented efficiently and in a timely manner to ensure a speedy resolution to the matter, and uphold the rights of confidentiality of all parties involved.

Smashing Times Company is committed to ensuring that staff are facilitated and encouraged, without fear of sanction or retribution, to discuss or report to senior staff, actions or activities of their work colleagues, that are suspicious or are actually abusive of children or Vulnerable Adults

We will ensure that our staff will have the skills and competences, training, to effectively deal with any child or Vulnerable Adult welfare or protection concern in a timely, appropriate and professional manner in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

We will employ 'best practice' in our recruitment and selection policies and practices so as to minimise risk to children and Vulnerable Adults in our services.

Smashing Times Theatre Company Recruitment Policies and our recruitment practices establish and maintain standards of practice that will seek at all times to promote children and Vulnerable Adult's welfare

Smashing Times acknowledges that safe care for the children and Vulnerable Adults who use our services starts with the appointment of staff and volunteers that are suitably qualified, skilled and vetted (Gardai/Police checks and references), and who have the desired competences to deliver a quality service, where children and Vulnerable Adults are safe and supported.

Staff's supervision sessions will facilitate ongoing discussion about, and monitoring of, safe care and child or Vulnerable Adult protection matters. The Manager will periodically review with the worker, their understanding of the child or Vulnerable Adult protection policies, and also monitor any training needs in relation to safe care and child or Vulnerable Adult protection matters.

## **Training**

Effective child and Vulnerable Adult protection requires that all those working in Smashing Times Theatre Company regularly review their training needs and participate in training. Promote understanding in the recognition and identification of child abuse.

Ensure staff understands relevant legislation, national guidelines and policies and procedures for the protection of children and Vulnerable Adults.

Translate learning into a better service for those children, young people or Vulnerable Adults and their families who use Smashing Times Theatre Company services.

The level and type of training provided would depend on the degree of involvement that particular staff have in direct child or Vulnerable Adult contact.

Staff with direct contact with children and Vulnerable Adults are required to take the Tusla E-Learning Programme once every two years, or at the discretion of the Company Manager <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>

## **What May Constitute a Concern About a Child?**

A concern relates to the possibility of a child suffering harm or abuse. Indicators of this may include:

- Sudden, unexplained or worrying changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming withdrawn, displaying sudden outbursts of temper or displaying inappropriate sexual awareness for their age).
- Physical signs or symptoms that may be indicative of abuse (e.g. unexplained or suspicious injuries or for which the explanation given seems inconsistent, or physical appearance such as weight loss for no apparent reason or a dirty or unkempt appearance).
- Worrying remarks made by a child.
- A situation where a child has been exposed to potential risk of harm.

Due to the nature of expressivity involved with all arts forms, staff and volunteers should be aware that children may express their emotions in different ways. Any concerns about a child should be reported in line with the reporting procedure.

## **What is a Disclosure?**

A disclosure is when a child tells a member of staff or a volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may constitute physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect or bullying.

## **Dealing With Disclosure**

If a child makes a disclosure, it is important that staff or volunteers:

- Stay calm - do not panic!
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling.
- Listen to what the child is saying, do not rush them or ask leading questions.
- Do not promise to keep secrets, as the child's welfare is paramount and they must pass this information on to the Designated Officer.
- Record in writing what was said and/or observed as soon as possible so that they do not forget any information and try to write exact words if possible.

- Report without delay within the reporting procedure.
- Record they made the report.

Staff or Volunteers should Never:

- Question unless for clarification;
- Make promises you cannot keep;
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate;
- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser; and
- Take sole responsibility, you consult the designated officer so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

## **Concerns or Allegations About the Behaviour of a Member of Staff or Volunteer**

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or communication, favouritism or negligence, or a breach in the Code of Behaviour may constitute a concern about the conduct of a member of staff. An allegation about a staff member occurs when a child, parent/guardian or another member of staff reports specific unacceptable behaviour where a child has been harmed or abused in some way.

## **Responding To Concerns, Disclosures And Allegations**

Staff should be aware that signs and symptoms are not a checklist or definite indicators that abuse or harm has occurred, as other areas of a child's life may affect their behaviour at a given moment (e.g. separation anxiety, homesickness or bereavement). In some instances, it may be appropriate for a member of staff or volunteer to check out a concern with the child, parent/guardian, colleagues or supervisor.

Similarly, there will be times when it is inappropriate to do so, particularly (but not exclusively) in relation to a disclosure or an allegation. It is not the member of staff or volunteer's responsibility to investigate a concern or decide if abuse or harm has occurred. Staff and volunteers simply need to ensure that all information is passed to the Designated Officer without delay.

All concerns, disclosures and allegations should be recorded and passed to the Designated Officer as outlined in the Reporting Procedure in Section 2.4, no matter how insignificant they may seem and regardless of whether they relate to situations internal or external to an organisation (i.e. any concerns connected to a family or school situation should be noted as well as concerns within an organisation).

If there is an emergency and the Designated Officer cannot be contacted, staff and volunteers should know to contact the HSE or Gardai (in the Republic of Ireland) or the Social Services, the PSNI or the NSPCC directly (in Northern Ireland.)

## **Allegations About a Member of Staff or Volunteer**

An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer must be referred to the Designated Officer, who will then pass it on to the head of the board.

In the case of an allegation against the designated officer, a referral will be made to the other Designated Officer, the Artistic Director.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Smashing Times have procedures in place for dealing with concerns raised by staff and volunteers and for reporting those concerns to the relevant bodies. In any case where an allegation is made, or if staff member or volunteer has concerns, a record needs to be made, the information below needs to be adhered to when writing your report:

- Date
- Name of staff member / volunteer
- Name of the Child
- Age of the child
- Any special factors
- Name of parent / guardian (s) / primary carer
- Home address (and phone number if available)
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of someone else.
- What prompted the concerns, include dates, times etc of any specific incidents.
- Any physical signs. Behavioural signs. Indirect signs.
- Has the child been spoken to. If so what was said.
- Have the parents / guardians been contacted. If so what was said.
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser. If so record details.
- Has anyone else been consulted. If so record detail.

# Child Safeguarding Statement

## 1. Name of service being provided

Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality

## 2. Nature of service

Smashing Times is an award-winning professional theatre and film company involved in performance, training and participation. The work is underpinned by a rights-based approach and a commitment to artistic excellence and social engagement. Smashing Times has worked for over twenty years using creative processes of theatre and film to promote peace, human rights, gender equality, anti-racism, anti-sectarianism, remembrance and positive mental health. As a leading professional arts organisation the company develops innovative, cutting edge, state of the art national and transnational projects that promote social justice, peace, gender equality, human rights and positive mental health through high quality artistic processes, merging art, culture and politics to interact and engage with contemporary society and the world we live in.

## Youth

We work with children, specifically with young people aged between 12 and 30. The largest cohort is currently within the age of 18 to 30 but we also work with children under the age of 18 and are committed to ensuring that safeguarding their welfare is of the highest priority regardless of their social economic or geographical situation.

We undertake to provide a safe environment and positive experience, the welfare of the young person being of paramount importance. Smashing Times have a youth advisory panel that recognise the duty of care it has: to staff, volunteers and all young people who access the organisation's services and that it ultimately responsible for ensuring that Smashing Times meets its legal and moral obligations to them.

Smashing Times has adopted a whole organisation approach to welfare and the child safeguarding. All those involved with the organisation including staff, volunteers and board members are made aware of the key role they play in safeguarding the welfare of young people.

We will ensure we are fully compliant with the Children First Act 2015. We will adhere to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and to the policies and procedures we have developed to ensure this commitment is enshrined in all aspects of the organisation.

We engage and work directly with young people through the following activities:

- Drama and Arts based workshops
- Rehearsals



- Theatre and production performances
- Festivals
- Auditions
- Online Workshops
- Consultations, including on-line and in-person focus groups and youth participation bodies
- We communicate with young people from time-to-time online and via email and have procedures in place to manage this.
- International exchanges and residentials inclusive of volunteering and internship placements.

### **3. Risk Assessment**

We have carried out an assessment of any potential risk of harm to a child while availing of our services. This includes the area of online safety when hosting workshops online with young participants. 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 Risk of harm not being recognised by Smashing Times Staff
  - Procedure for provision of, and access to child safeguarding training, induction and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
  
- 2 Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by Smashing Times Staff
  - All personnel are provided with procedures for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla, including information on the role and responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person and Mandated Persons.
  
- 3 Risk of young person being harmed by Smashing Times Staff
  - Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of Staff and volunteers that will be working with youth have been through the procedure of Garda Vetting.
  - Policy of behaviour/supervision/ training and support of staff/volunteers as stated in Smashing Times Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy.
  
- 4 Risk of harm due to bullying of a young person
  - Smashing Times Anti-bullying Policy

- 5 Risk of harm caused to a young person due to an insufficient number of trained staff present whilst participating on a Smashing Times event or workshop.
- Smashing Times Code of Behaviour Policy and Adult/Young People Ratios for staff/volunteers in Smashing Times Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy. ST Safeguarding Policy for Working with Youth Online
- 6 Risk of continued harm arising from the mishandling of an allegation of misconduct or abuse by a young person against a member of Smashing Times personnel
- Procedure for the management of allegations of misconduct against workers/volunteers of a young person availing of our services. ST Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy
- 7 Risk of harm caused by Smashing Times personnel communicating with young people in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- Smashing Times Safeguarding Policy for Working with Youth Online
  - Smashing Timtes Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy
- 8 Risk of harm caused to a young person by Smashing Times staff through inappropriate use of video/images taken by a staff member/volunteer/Youth Worker or participant while attending a Smashing Times event
- Smashing Times Privacy Policy
  - Smashing Times Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy
- 9 Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of young people's personal data
- Smashing Times Policy Privacy Policy
- 10 Risk of harm to young people from third parties when sharing accommodation and other facilities for Smashing Times events
- Smashing Times takes account of the safety of young people when booking accommodation. In volunteering placements, we ensure separate and contained sleeping facilities without St staff.
  - Smashing Times Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy
- 11 Risk of harm to a young person from a third party while participating in an online workshop
- Smashing Times Safeguarding Policy for Working with Youth Online

#### **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.

- Procedure for the management of risks identified.
- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children.
- Procedures for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to TUSLA
- Procedure for maintaining list of the persons in the relevant service who are the mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

#### **5. Implementation**

Smashing Times recognises 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 will be reviewed on 28/11/2021, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

## **Safeguarding Policy for Working with Young People Online**

### Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Smashing Times' Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policy applies equally in the online space as it does in our usual working spaces when working with young children and vulnerable adults.

Working online Smashing Times Policies have a particular focus on:

- Communication with Young People including usage of third party sites
- Use of Images Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality

### **Key points**

- Smashing Times employees who are working with youth will only use the Smashing Times Company email, social media or app accounts to communicate with young people and their guardians and will maintain separation from their personal online presence.
- Smashing Times employees who are working with youth participants will regularly discuss safe use of those sites/apps with young people and their guardians who are participating in online workshops.
- Smashing Times do not require any youth participant's social media sites to disclose personal information and do not tag or provide contact details of youth participants on social media sites.
- Smashing Times Communications Officer, Féilim O'Bradaigh, along with Youth Arts Development Officer, Larissa Manley will moderate the content of all social media sites, monitoring posts, removing inappropriate content and liaising with the Designated Liaison Person, who is Smashing Times Company Manager, Freda Manweiler on any instances of bullying or harassment.
- Smashing Times maintain the safest and most appropriate settings on each social media site / app to safeguard youth participants who are engaged in any Smashing Times workshops online.
- Smashing Times require written permission in advance, from parents and/or schools for use of children's images or video in publications and online.
- Smashing Times will securely hold on record, in electronic format participant and guardian personal contact information which will be destroyed after one year of last contact. Smashing Times will not share personal contact information with any third parties. This is stated in the Smashing Times Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in accordance with GPDR
- All records pertaining to child safety complaints or concerns are held securely in a locked cabinet that only senior management and child protection officer have access to.

### **Staff and Volunteers Working Online with Youth**

All Smashing Times' staff/volunteers who are communicating with or working with young people online

have been Garda vetted and are fully briefed on the Smashing Times' employee code of behaviour and child protection policy for safeguarding children online as stated in this document and the Smashing Times Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policy. All staff observe correct adult to young person ratios when conducting work online as well as correct procedures for communicating with young people.

### **Key Points**

- Recruitment and Selection of Staff/ Volunteers (including the requirement re. Garda Vetting) -
- Procedures for supervision, provision of training and support for staff/volunteers
- Smashing Times Policy on Adult/Young People Ratios online:

### **Group**

One Adult per group of ten young people. Plus one other adult.

An additional adult for each group of ten thereafter.

### **One to One**

When working one adult to one young person, it is required that there is another adult present or at least within sight or hearing distance of others.

### **Child Welfare Concerns Online**

If Smashing Times note any Child Protection concerns while online working with young people, we will adhere to the guidelines and reporting procedures as per the Smashing Times' Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and/or statutory reporting requirements.

### **Working Policy With Parents/ Guardians**

Smashing Times understand that it is important at this time to connect with parents / guardians and to explain why and how we intend to organise online youth arts activities for their child to participate in. Smashing Times acknowledge that different families will have different rules and approaches to screen-time and so clarity on the purpose and value of online youth arts activities is important. Smashing Times endeavour at all times to be transparent with parents/guardians in any activities that are carried out online with their children. This includes the following:

- Smashing Times will require and review all the parental permissions in place in respect of young members participating in any Smashing Times online workshops who are under the digital age of consent of sixteen. For information on the digital age of consent see: <https://www.webwise.ie/news/gdpr-digital-age-consent/>

- The online workshop consent form for parents will include the following:
  1. Acknowledgement of online methods of communication as per the Smashing Times ‘Working with Young People Online’ Policy
  2. Acknowledgement of fair use policy when downloading the particular app that is being used to host the workshop.
  3. Privacy Statement
  4. Photo and Video consent form as per Smashing Times Privacy Statement

### **Smashing Times’ Video Conferencing Apps**

Smashing Times will be using popular video-conferencing apps such as Zoom, Skype, Houseparty and Google Hangouts which are all varied in what they have to offer in terms of their suitability for working with groups online.

- Smashing Times will endeavour to monitor and include the most appropriate ratio of child to youth arts facilitator in the participation process.
- Smashing Times will choose the App(s) that works best for the workshop and will do our utmost to consider the appropriateness of each platform from a safeguarding point of view.
- Smashing Times will ensure that the apps that are used in any production young people comply with the Smashing Times’ Data Protection Policy in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) .
- Smashing Times understands that all images and video of people are considered personal data, and any app used by Smashing Times to host activities is processing data on Smashing Times’ behalf and is therefore a Third Party Data Processor. Smashing Times therefore carefully considers the Terms and Conditions when opening an account and will exercise reasonable care to ensure that the Third Party Data Processor carries out the processing in compliance with the GDPR

### **Safety Structures for Managing Online Video Workshops**

Whichever App Smashing Times will decide to use, the following measures are in place to manage video meetings in a way that considers the wellbeing of all involved:

- Parents must be present during the workshop with 4 to 11 year olds.
- Parents do not need to be present when the child is aged 12 to 18.
- Technical safety measures will be implemented:
  1. Young participants in any Smashing Times’ workshops do not need to have an account to

participate.

2. Participants will be invited by email with a link and password to the meeting.
3. Attendees are kept in a waiting room and they have to be verified by email and name by a registration sheet to join the workshop.
4. Workshops will be hosted from an account held and managed by Smashing Times and not from any Smashing Times personal employee account.
5. Chat will be disabled on the hosting app and will only allow chat from the host to the participants and vice versa.
6. The sharing screen option will be disabled with participants, allowing only the host to use this function.
7. The host will have full control over muting the audio and/or the video of any of the participants, should the situation require.
8. More than one Smashing Times member of staff will have access to the hosting account details to ensure transparency in the workshop.
9. Smashing Times will ensure that meetings are password protected and can only be joined by invitees.
10. Smashing Times will never invite anyone to join a meeting unless they are a member or employee designated and vetted to work with the Youth group or individual.
11. Smashing Times will request prior permission from parents and guardians if the workshop is being recorded or photographed and this information will be stored according to Smashing Times Privacy Statement in accordance with GDPR.
12. Smashing Times will have a good working understanding of the features of the chosen app in advance and will provide clear guidance to any young participants on safe use of the app prior to working online.
13. Smashing Times will time-limit meetings and will be clear on the planned duration of the online interaction in advance especially as the concentration span possible will be less than that in a regular workshop. Smashing Times will consider sessions of between 30 minutes and a maximum of one hour.
14. Smashing Times will be clear on the code of conduct for participants and will work with members to adapt the group contract to cover working online prior to any artistic work. This will include setting and establishing expectations for dressing appropriately, participating fully and working together etc.
15. Smashing Times will check with participants that they are comfortable with using the app and whether they are experiencing any barriers to participation (e.g. no broadband access or access to equipment; a disability that impacts their ability to interact via screen such as visual impairment etc.) Smashing Times will provide accommodations as appropriate.
16. Smashing Times will reconsider working online if it leads to the significant exclusion of participants.