

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name and nature of service being provided

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) is a national organisation working to promote justice, empowerment and equality with migrants and their families. MRCI operates a national centre providing information and support to migrant workers and their families mainly in relation to immigration and workplace rights. We combine frontline services, policy, legal advocacy and campaigning with community and youth work that builds the critical participation of migrants and seeks to support their leadership on migrant rights issues.

MRCI does not have a targeted programme of work for children. MRCI comes into contact, either direct or indirect with children and young people through 1) our national Information & Support Centre and casework that supports migrant families and 2) through our community work and outreach activities where parents are occasionally joined by their children, 3) or whereby a disclosure is made to a member of staff during the course of their work

Throughout our work MRCI strives to ensure that children and young people who access our service and are active in the work of MRCI, are safe from harm and the organisation believes best interests of children are paramount. Our guiding principles are underpinned by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*, *Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and current legislation such as the Children First Act 2015 and the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.

In accordance with the requirements of above, the Board of Management of the MRCI has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document. This statement has been developed not only to safeguard children and young people in our service but also families, staff, Fellowship awardees and volunteers engaged in the work of MRCI. This document is based on, and adheres to, the following:

As an organisation MRCI:

- Recognises that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- Fully complies with our statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- Co-operates fully with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- Adopts safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and to protect workers from the need to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- Respects in full confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- Believes that our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation and that staff/volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation;
- Upholds that all children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background;

2. Application of Safeguarding Statement

This Safeguarding Statement is displayed prominently on the MRCI website, our offices and at locations in which we run activities and outreach. A copy will be made available to all staff and interns. It is readily available to families and young people upon request and a copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs if required. The Safeguarding Statement applies to:

- All the staff of MRCI
- Students on placement
- Volunteers and Fellowship awardees

- Board Members
- Children, young people and their families accessing our services

The Child Safeguarding Statement also applies when working in the MRCI offices, including at locations outside of the main office, and while representing MRCI at other venues; conducting outreach and at external events.

3. Assessing risk and procedures

MRCI has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services including an area of online safety when accessing the internet. The MRCI Board of Management has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Sancha Magat (Information & Support Centre Manager in MRCI) and can be contacted at sancha@mrcl.ie
- The Deputy Liaison Person (DDL) is Daniel Korolev (Caseworker in MRCI) and can be contacted at daniel@mrcl.ie
- Child Protection Officer, is Hilary Royston, Director of Finance and Operations, MRCI

MRCI recognise that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of MRCI activities and must be reflected in all of MRCI's policies, procedures, practices and activities. Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. The following procedures and measures are in place:

1. MRCI has a procedure in place for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children. MRCI adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 engages in a thorough interview process and reference checks. Along with adherence to Garda Vetting legislation MRCI has Child Protection and Garda Vetting policies in place.
2. In relation to provision of information and where necessary instruction and training to staff in respect to the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act)
MRCI has these procedures in place;
 - Provides each member of staff with a copy of MRCI Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Provides Child Protection Training for new staff and ongoing for all staff
 - Has provided relevant child protection and safeguarding information in MRCI's overall supervision framework (namely staff induction), in MRCI staff handbook and Casework Manual
3. In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla MRCI has relevant procedures in place. All staff are made aware of DLP, Deputy DLP and mandated persons in the organisation. Training is provided on how to manage an allegation of abuse by a young person and reporting procedure as part of Child Protection Training and as per supervision, and orientation. MRCI'S Casework manual outlines steps for reporting allegations.
4. Procedures are in place for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service. MRCI's safeguarding statement and Code of Conduct is made available in all groups, on display on our website, in our premises and at relevant activities/events. Supervision of activities in youth and community work settings apply and complaints procedure are in place and known.
5. All staff and volunteers with MRCI are made aware of expected behaviour while interacting with young people. Relevant information made known through staff handbook and casework manual. A structured orientation period applies for all new staff; A Code of Conduct is contained in the Child Protection Policy and is made available to all staff and volunteers and is on the MRCI website. As above Child Protection training is provided to all new staff members and allegations and reporting are outlined in Child Protection policy and in the Casework Manual.
6. The above named DLP as being appointed as the "relevant person" (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in person of the child safeguarding statement.
7. Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons for dealing with allegations of abuse or misconduct;

4. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing 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 annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter which this statement refers.

Provider's name and contact details:

For queries in relation to the Safeguarding Statement, please contact the relevant person as required under the Children First Act 2015:

Sancha Magat
Information & Support Centre Manager
Email sancha@mrci.ie, 01 531 32 39