



Child Safeguarding Statement of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council

IPCC Child Safeguarding Statement

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council with the aim of ensuring, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the educational services we provide is safe from 'harm' (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).

1. Service Being Offered

Irish Peatland Conservation Council Education Programme

2.1 Nature of the Service

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council's mission is to conserve a representative sample of the peatlands of Ireland for people to enjoy now and in the future. We own and manage the Bog of Allen Nature Centre in Co. Kildare which comprises nature gardens and habitats and a museum together with five peatland reserves in Counties Kildare, Meath, Kerry and Waterford which are managed for nature conservation.

A key part of our work is the provision of awareness, educational and field studies programmes for primary and post primary students. Our services include in house programmes delivered by our Education Officer from the Bog of Allen Nature Centre and on nearby Lodge Bog and outreach work where the Education Officer visits various schools around the country to deliver educational programmes as part of the Heritage in Schools Scheme and the Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland Workshops. In addition our Conservation Management staff may work with young people to undertake management activities on our nature reserves as part of a volunteering or work experience programme.

The in-house education and awareness programme has four elements:

A: field studies of a peatland habitat where children visit a peatland nature reserve owned by the IPCC (Lodge Bog) to undertake a variety of experiments and explorations on the habitat. During the site visit they work from educational decking and gain access along board walks to the site.

B: field studies at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre where children explore and interpret indoor and outdoor exhibits focusing on the natural environment.

C: We also welcome young people to the centre from School Transition Years on work experience or volunteering to assist with nature conservation management activities such as scrub removal, drain blocking, bird and butterfly surveys and water table monitoring in peatland habitats.

D: IPCC staff and volunteers engage with young people in the context of their families at various open days held at our properties in Kildare, Kerry, Meath and Waterford for example during Heritage Week, Biodiversity Week, International Bog Day.

The outreach programme mainly consists of classroom based workshops but may also include a visit to a locally based peatland/nature site to undertake various field studies.

2.2 Locations

IPCC's services are provided to children in the following locations

- On the IPCC premises at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre, in the museum and gardens or in a bog habitat at Lodge Bog or Lullymore West Bog in Co. Kildare
- * On an IPCC nature reserve at Girley Bog, Co. Meath, Fenor Bog, Co. Waterford or Coad Bog, Co. Kerry
- In their own school grounds or classroom anywhere in the country
- On a nature reserve site that is the property of another agency or individual

2.3 Service Users

IPCC's education programme works principally with Primary School and Secondary School students who book our educational programmes. School groups book a particular programme of study from our service are accompanied by their class teachers and parent volunteers so that the ratio of adult to child is 1:10. We also work with parents and children at public events held on our nature reserves or in other locations where our outreach services are engaged.

2.4 IPCC Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

IPCC's overarching commitment is to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

The following principles underpin our Child Safeguarding Statement:

- * The welfare and best interests of children are of paramount importance. The IPCC is committed to respecting the right to dignity and bodily integrity of every child and to protecting those rights in line with the core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as articulated in Articles 2, 3 and 6.
- * All IPCC staff members have a responsibility to protect children and therefore have a duty to report child abuse as set out in the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).
- * The IPCC fully accepts and endorses the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and maintains up-to-date child protection policies in line with these instruments and policies.
- * The IPCC will not knowingly engage with any person, organisation or fund any project that poses a risk to children or that does not meet the child protection and safeguards outlined in the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).
- * The IPCC upholds and is guided by the principles of the UNCRC and, in this regard, is committed to ensuring that all children with whom staff members have contact are treated equally and that all children have a right to voice their opinion in matters affecting them (Articles 2, 12 and 13).
- * The IPCC ensures that staff receives the appropriate training in child protection and welfare.
- * IPCC recruitment policy adheres to best practice and the IPCC ensures that all staff are vetted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU).

- * Volunteers working with children and young people will be vetted by the GCVU or will work alongside an IPCC member of staff who has been vetted by the GCVU.
- * Anyone contracted on a consultancy basis to work on projects that involve contact with children will be vetted by the GCVU or will work alongside an IPCC member of staff who has been vetted by the GCVU.

3. Risk Assessment

IPCC have undertaken a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of the educational services that we provide. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Number	Risk Identified	Level of Risk	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1	An independent adult traveller visiting the Bog of Allen Nature Centre uses the toilets at the same time as children participating in an education programme at the Centre	M	When a school group is on centre, a teacher or guardian will be asked to accompany children to the toilets. Visitors will be advised to use the staff toilets which are in a different location in the centre.
2	Delivery of IPCC events involving children by a staff member alone	M	Ensure that two IPCC personnel (staff member and volunteer) are present at all time during events involving children
3	Incident of inappropriate behaviour by a staff member	L	Staff members dealing with children must be garda vetted, take child protection training and declare in writing that they will adhere to the IPCC code of practice when on IPCC premises, in a school or visiting another site.
4	Photographing children while participating in an education programme or event with the IPCC	L	Seek written permission from parents or teachers accompanying children to photograph them or to use photographs in IPCC promotions (see Appendix 4). Children must never be named in photographs.
5	Use of technology by children or an IPCC staff member or volunteer to record photographs or film of children during an IPCC educational programme and uploading these images to the internet	M	Inform groups prior to their visit that photography is not permitted. Ensure staff and volunteers are aware that such activity is forbidden.
6	Inadequate supervision of children	M	When making a booking, schools are required to confirm that 'the class teacher will be present at all times and that the IPCC Staff member will not be left alone at any time with the pupils.' Mandatory adult/child ratios outlined in the Child Protection Policy must be adhered to by all staff.

4. Procedures for Safeguarding Children and Reporting

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017). In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service.

- * Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against a staff member of a child availing of our service
- * Procedure for the safe recruitment of staff
- * Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- * Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána

All procedures listed are available upon request.

5. Implementation

IPCC 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 was approved by the IPCC Committee of Management on the 13th March 2018 will be reviewed on the 11th March 2020, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

Designated Liaison Person/Chief Executive Officer

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