



# **Child Protection Policy**



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## Introduction

Dublin City University has adopted this Child Protection Policy in accordance with the requirements of:

- a) the Children First Act 2015;
- b) Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017; &
- c) Tusla guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to promote best practice in child protection within the University and to set out a procedural framework to ensure that:

- the University protects children and vulnerable adults under its care or supervision;
- all university members are equipped to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues; &
- management are equipped to make appropriate decisions in the event of specific child protection concerns arising.

## Scope

This Policy applies to:

- a) all Units of the University (both academic and professional), including its campus companies and research centres, which are all hereinafter collectively referred to as either the 'University' or 'DCU';
- b) all employees and students of the University who may have contact with children or vulnerable adults (either on or off campus) in the course of their duties or in fulfilment of the requirements of their programmes of study; &
- c) all other external parties (e.g. agents, contractors' organisations, groups, summer residency programmes / activities) operating both within a DCU campus and on behalf of DCU will be required to adhere to this Policy.



## Policy Statement

1. The University recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of university life and therefore must be reflected (where applicable) in its policies, procedures, practices and activities. In adhering to the following key principles of best practice in child protection and welfare, all university members will:
  - recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
  - fully comply with statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
  - fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
  - adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
  - where appropriate, develop a practice of openness with parents/carers and encourage parental/carer involvement in the education of their children;
  - &
  - fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

All university members will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult with a special vulnerability.

2. All DCU faculties, offices and departments (collectively referred to as 'Units' as included in the scope section above) shall adopt and implement fully, and without modification, the *DCU Child Protection Procedures document* (see the 'Related Documentation' section) as part of this overall Policy.
3. In relation to the reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all university members are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the *DCU Child Protection Procedures document*, including in the case of mandated persons, reporting under the Children First Act 2015.

**Please note: All child protection concerns must be channelled through the DCU Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is the person responsible for making reports to Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other external agencies. In the event that the concern relates to the DCU DLP the concern must be reported to the DCU President.**

4. This Child Protection Policy shall be published on the DCU website.



## Roles & Responsibilities

### 1. Specific Responsibilities of DCU Units

- a) All Units that potentially have contact with children or vulnerable adults will designate a senior fulltime member of staff as the Designated Child Protection Contact Person (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) for that Unit with responsibility for ensuring that a Child Protection Risk Assessment is undertaken and compiled for the Unit.
- b) The Unit's Designated Child Protection Contact Person will act as a resource person for any member of the Unit's community who has a child protection concern. In addition, the Designated Child Protection Contact Person will work and liaise closely with the University's Designated Liaison Person and Mandated Person/s (if there are any in their Unit).
- c) The Unit's Designated Child Protection Contact Person shall ensure that he/she is knowledgeable about child protection and will undertake any training considered necessary to keep him/her updated on new developments.
- d) The name and contact details of the Unit's Designated Child Protection Contact Person and the DCU Designated Liaison Person will be displayed prominently on the Unit's website.

### 2. DCU Units e.g. Faculties, Offices and Departments

Where considered appropriate Units will:

- a) Provide information, instructions and training in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) and will implement the following:
  - Refer all employees to the DCU Website location of the DCU Child Protection Policy and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS);
  - Encourage personnel to avail of relevant training;
  - Encourage management to avail of relevant training;
  - &
  - Ensure management maintains records of all personnel training.
- b) In relation to the selection or recruitment of employees and their suitability to work with children, Units will adhere to the DCU Garda Vetting / Police Clearance Policy for staff.
- c) Carry out a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending or participating in Unit activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk



identified, and procedures for managing those risks, will be compiled in accordance with Appendix 2 of the *DCU Child Protection Procedures*.

- d) Provide a copy of the Unit's 'Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment' (see Appendix 3 of the *DCU Child Protection Procedures*), and a full list of mandated persons in the Unit, to the DLP.
- e) Ensure, where appropriate, that the DCU Child Protection Policy, including the Unit's risk assessment, is readily accessible to parents and carers on request.

The Unit Risk Assessment shall be reviewed as part of the annual review of the DCU Child Protection Policy or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment refers.

### 3. **Child Protection Training**

Effective child protection depends on the skills, knowledge and values of employees working with children and families, as well as co-operation between agencies (interagency) and within agencies (intra-agency). Relevant training and education are an important means of achieving this.

It is imperative that all Units operating in DCU ensure that all employees are familiar with this Policy (and its related Procedures and Statement) to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities therein. This will be achieved by each Unit developing a culture of awareness and knowledge of the Policy, Procedures and Statement amongst all employees and, where necessary, ensuring that appropriate training is undertaken.

It is recommended that all DCU employees who may have potential contact with children and/or vulnerable adults complete the Child Protection Online Training which can be accessed at [this link](#).

**Note:** The link to the training is routed through the Essential eLearning platform managed by the University's Human Relations Office.

### 4. **Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons**

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) responsible for dealing with all child protection matters in DCU is the Chief Operations Officer.

In the absence of the Designated Liaison Person the Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDL) responsible for dealing with child protection matters are the Deputy Chief Operations Officer or the Deputy President.



Contact	Name	Contact details
<b>Designated Liaison Person (DLP)</b>	Dr Declan Raftery <b>Chief Operations Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:child.protection@dcu.ie">child.protection@dcu.ie</a> 01-700 5118 01-700 8257
<b>Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL P)</b>	Martin Ward, <b>Deputy Chief Operations Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:child.protection@dcu.ie">child.protection@dcu.ie</a> 01- 700 7476
<b>Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL P)</b>	Prof. Anne Sinnott <b>Deputy President</b>	<a href="mailto:child.protection@dcu.ie">child.protection@dcu.ie</a> 01-700 5396

## Policy Violation

The University may take appropriate action against an individual(s) where:

- a member of the University has been found to be in breach of this Policy (including instances of where an individual covered up, obstructed, failed to report or to monitor an issue that they become aware of);  
or
- where the University reasonably believes that a deliberately false allegation has been made.

Any actions taken by the University with respect to university employees and students will be initiated in accordance with the appropriate DCU regulations and disciplinary procedures, which may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- i. the initiation of steps for implementation of disciplinary procedures under [DCU Statute No. 5 of 2010: Suspension and Dismissal of Employees](#) leading to demotion or dismissal (relevant to university employees only);  
or
- ii. the initiation of steps for implementation of the Dublin City University Code of Conduct for students.

## Related Documentation

1. [DCU Child Safeguarding Statement](#)
2. [DCU Child Protection Procedures](#)
3. [DCU Garda Vetting / Police Clearance Policy for Staff](#)
4. [DCU Code of Conduct for Employees](#)
5. [DCU Employee Grievance Procedure](#)
6. [DCU Student Code of Conduct and Discipline](#)



## Definitions

<b>Child</b>	The Child Care Act, 1991 defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.
<b>Vulnerable Adult</b>	A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may require assistance to care for themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.
<b>Age of Consent</b>	<p>In Ireland the age of sexual consent is 17 years. It is a criminal offence to engage or attempt to engage in a sexual act with a child under 17 years of age.</p> <p><b><u>Please note:</u></b> It is a serious offence for a person who is, or has previously been, in a position of authority over a child, to engage in a sexual act with a child or young person who is under the age of 18 (regardless of the fact that the legal age of consent is 17). Such a young person can never legally consent to engaging in a sexual act with a person who is, or who has previously been, in a position of authority over them.</p> <p>A full list of persons considered to be in a position of authority is set out in the law, which includes, for example, family members, carers, teachers and sports coaches.</p>
<b>Child Abuse</b>	The words ‘child abuse’ as used in the Procedures should be taken to include all four categories (neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse) as outlined below and in appendix 1 of the Procedures document and in chapter 2 of Children First (2017).
<b>Neglect</b>	Neglect is when a child is not provided with adequate food or shelter, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment, and/or care, nurturance or supervision to a severe and/or persistent extent where the health or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at risk.
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child whereby the child’s basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse.





**Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents, however, it does not include accidental injury.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for their gratification or arousal, or for that of others.

**Bullying**

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others.

**Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

‘Designated Liaison Person’ means a person nominated by DCU to act as the liaison person to deal with the Child and Family Agency, TUSLA and / or An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegation/s of and / or concerns about child abuse. The Designated Liaison Person will also be the ‘Relevant Person’.

**Relevant Person (RP)**

‘Relevant Person’ means the person appointed by DCU as the relevant person in accordance with Section 8 of the Children First Act 2015. The Relevant Person will also be the Designated Liaison Person.

**Designated Child Protection Contact Person**

The Designated Child Protection Contact Person will be appointed by the Head of each relevant Unit, and will be the ‘go to person’ in the Unit concerning child protection matters. The Designated Child Protection Contact Person will work and liaise closely with the Designated Liaison Person and Mandated Person/s.

**Mandated Person**

‘Mandated Person’ means a person who is specified in Schedule 2, Children First Act 2015. Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Organisations that provide a relevant service to children are also considered mandated persons. The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on mandated persons to report child protection concerns.

**Employee**

In the context of this Policy the word ‘employee’ includes all full-time, part-time and voluntary employees of the University.

**Parent / Carer**

The phrase ‘parent/carer’ is used in this Policy, and its Procedures, as it is used in Children First (2017) to refer to the child’s parent or carer as appropriate.



**All members of the DCU community**

The phrase ‘all members of the DCU community’ as used in this Policy, and its Procedures, is a generic term to encompass all adults who are involved in the operation of DCU. It covers employees, students and voluntary workers.

University members include:

- members of Governing Authority
- members of Heads and Deans
- members of Academic Council
- the University’s employees
- the University’s students
- any other person Governing Authority may designate as a member

For the purpose of this Policy, it also includes any volunteer, service provider or graduate member engaged in the University’s arranged activity.

**Student**

Includes all full-time and part-time registered students of the University.

**Associated Organisations/External Parties**

All University contractors, associated organisations, visitors and/or any other parties who are granted access to the University’s resources and/or facilities but who are not under the direct management of DCU.

## Contact

A dedicated email account has been established to facilitate communication on child protection matters at [child.protection@dcu.ie](mailto:child.protection@dcu.ie).

For further details on any aspect of this Child Protection Policy please contact the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Designated Liaison Persons.

## Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this Policy refers.



## Version Control

<b>Document Name</b>	Child Protection Policy	
<b>Version Reference</b>	Version 2.0	
<b>Document Owner</b>	Office of the Chief Operations Officer	
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive	
<b>Date</b>	December 14th 2021	

End.