

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(Updated 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010)

This Child Production Policy is issued in connection with Young Irish Film Makers (YIFM). It is primarily concerned with the health and welfare of children and young people attending classes, workshops

## STATEMENT

YIFM is an inclusive organisation and actively encourages the safety and well-being of children and young people, and a caring culture and environment which supports this. We aim to create a safe and caring environment where children can enjoy rewarding and stimulating experiences.

YIFM will not tolerate an environment which allows bullying, racism or homophobia. Paid staff and all volunteers will, at all times, show loving care, respect and understanding for all members of our organisation regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or nationality.

Silence breeds abuse and exploitation of children. Paedophiles will seek out organisations with weak communication structures and thrive where secrecy and shame prevail. Furthermore, without proper policies and explicit procedures in place, we are extremely vulnerable to false allegations of child abuse.

### **All YIFM staff recognises that children should be:**

- listened to and heard
- valued and respected as individuals
- respected for their identity and uniqueness
- encouraged and praised
- involved in decisions as appropriate regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Young Irish Film Makers takes any suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse very seriously, and the company Child Protection Procedures set out the supportive, confidential and professional nature of how suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse are reported both internally within YIFM and to appropriate statutory authorities.

All Staff in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

It is important that staff members and young people are aware of, and confident in using, YIFM's child protection procedures. Staff and young people should actively and openly discuss the issues within this document in order to ensure that we work in an environment where the systems of reporting are clear, and everyone feels comfortable in how to deal with suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse.

## **We will endeavour to safeguard children by:**

1. Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
2. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers
3. Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
4. Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
5. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
6. Regularly monitoring and reviewing our policy and good practice

The definition of 'child' or 'young person' relates to anyone under the age of 18, and also to those above the age of 18 who are vulnerable for reasons of mental and physical ability.

The above Policy Statement applies to all paid staff, members of YIFM and all volunteers whether these people's involvement is full or part-time, seasonal or permanent. A copy of this statement along with the subsequent procedures will be given to all of the above people on their initial interview in order that any queries may be addressed before a permanent commitment is given by YIFM.

This policy is reviewed annually. This Policy will also be available on our website.

### **DESIGNATED PERSON**

**YIFM has a designated person who takes on responsibility for child protection issues. The designated person is Mike Kelly who can be contacted on 056 7764677. The assistant designated person is Angela Walsh who can also be contacted on 056 7764677. YIFM Operations Manager is Angela Walsh - 056 7764677**

The role of the designated person is to:

- Ensure that the Child Protection Procedures are followed.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of these procedures.
- Ensure all staff knows to whom they must pass on their concerns.
- Act as a source of expertise and advice within YIFM.
- Co-ordinate action within YIFM and develop an effective working relationship with other agencies.
- Make referrals to HSE/Gardai where child abuse is likely to occur, or is suspected or disclosed.
- Attend child protection conferences where necessary or submit reports on YIFM's behalf to the conference.

Local HSE social worker department contact is: Community Care Centre, James' Green, Kilkenny Tel: 056 7784600. **Garda** telephone contact is 056 7775000.

## **Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers**

Young Irish Film Makers is committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy;
- Inform participating primary carers of workshop content including all activities and potential activities;
- Comply with health and safety practices;
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- 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.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person;
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk;
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact local HSE and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

### **Young Irish Film Makers commitment to protect children:**

- All YIFM staff will sign up to and abide by the attached code of conduct
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy.
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people.
- Induction will include briefing on child protection issues.
- We will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.

- Systems will be established by every Member to investigate possible abuse once reported and to deal with it.

**How we will ensure our commitments above are met:**

- All YIFM staff will sign up to and abide by the attached code of conduct.
- All partners will sign and abide by the code of conduct.
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy.
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people.
- Induction will include training on child protection policy and issues.
- Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.
- Systems will be established to investigate and deal with possible abuse once reported.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF**

The following section outlines an approach to YIFM's safe recruitment and selection practices.

### **Clear Definition of the Role of Employees or Volunteers:**

This means clarifying and agreeing expectations regarding the role of new volunteer/staff member. It involves identification of the minimum level of qualities and skills required to fill the post.

### **Application Form**

An application form, with a clear job description and information about the YIFM will be supplied to elicit all relevant information about the applicant, including their past experience of working with children.

There are several prime areas of concern that would suggest a candidate is a risk and not suitable to work with children, including criminal histories of:

- Child abuse
- Child / adult sexual abuse
- Violence
- Child pornography / internet offences involving children
- Offences involving dealing or trafficking of illegal drugs.

Other areas of concern would include:

- Substance abuse
- Insufficient documentary evidence of identification
- Major dishonesty / deception/concealing information
- Driving offences if the person is to drive as part of their employment

All applicants are required to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with young people and they must consent to Garda vetting.

All applicants should be interviewed by a panel comprising of at least two senior representatives of the YIFM to explore the information stated on the application form and assess the applicant's suitability. The information supplied by the applicant and any other information supplied on their behalf will only be seen by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.

An applicant will be expected to supply the names of two referees (not family members) who will testify as to their character, their suitability to the role of volunteer/employee, or any other issues which may affect their ability to perform the tasks required of them. An acceptable reference will indicate that the person is known to the referee and is considered suitable by them to work with young people. All references should be in writing which will always be confirmed by telephone, letter or personal visit.

## **Induction and Training**

- If following the application and interview process the applicant is accepted they will be made aware that their employment is subject to a probationary period of six months.
- New employees will be required to undertake an induction course that will enable employees to get to know YIFM, their colleagues, their job and other organisations or agencies doing similar or related work. It provides an opportunity for members to explain YIFM's structure, names and functions of those involved, expectations, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances and allegations. During the induction period, where feasible, participants should be partnered with an experienced volunteer/employee who will guide them through this process.
- Specific training in YIFM child protection procedures and code of conduct will be undertaken by our designated person or their deputy. All new staff will be required to read and sign our Child Protection policy statement.

## **Allegations against members of staff**

We will ensure that employees, volunteers and young people are aware of the internal line management reporting procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against volunteers, employees or other members of YIFM. When an allegation of abuse is made against a volunteer or employee, YIFM has a dual responsibility in respect of both the young person and the volunteer/employee or other accused person.

## **General Procedures**

There are various situations in which allegations may be made involving persons associated with YIFM. The most common are:

- a. An allegation of abuse against an employee within YIFM.
- b. An allegation of abuse against a volunteer within YIFM.
- c. A complaint or allegation against a young person who is a member of YIFM.

Though the duty to report remains the same in each situation, individual procedures may differ slightly, and are detailed as follows.

## **Procedure where a Complaint or Allegation has been made against an Employee**

It is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with reporting issues and employment/contractual issues. The Designated Person will normally have responsibility for the young person. He or she will also deal with allegations made against a volunteer. The Operations Manager or equivalent senior person within the organisation will have responsibility for dealing with allegations made against an employee. Action taken in reporting an allegation against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith.

All allegations should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the Health Board; this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern. The following steps should be taken:

- a. The first priority should be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The Operations Manager should, as a matter of urgency, take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee financially or otherwise, unless this action is necessary to protect children. Legal advice should be sought in this regard
- b. If a decision is made to report the matter to the Health Board, the Operations Manager follows the standard reporting procedure in respect of the young person. The Artistic Director or equivalent senior person should inform the employee that an allegation has been made and explain the nature of that allegation. The employee should be afforded the right to respond in accordance with established grievance procedure. The response should be noted and passed to the Health Board if a formal report is being made. The Operations Manager should also notify the Health Board of any other organisation working with children with which the alleged abuser is thought or known to be involved
- c. The parents/carers of the young person should be informed immediately of the complaint against the employee unless by doing so you endanger the young person. Advice should be taken from the statutory authorities as to how this might best be done
- d. The follow up on an allegation of abuse against an employee should be made in consultation with the Health Board and An Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting should be arranged with these two agencies for this purpose.
- e. After the consultations referred to above have taken place, and when pursuing the question of the future position of the employee the Chairperson should advise the employee of the situation and should follow the agreed procedures.
- f. Employers should ensure that any actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by the Health Board or An Garda Síochána. It is strongly recommended that employers maintain close liaison with the relevant authorities to maintain this co-operation.
- g. The person accused will need support pending an investigation. It would be unwise for this to be provided within the Young Irish Film Makers, and external services should be accessible to the employee for this purpose.

These procedures apply in all cases, including those cases where the employee is employed or contracted on a part time or consultancy basis.

### **Procedure where an Allegation is made against a Volunteer**

If an allegation is made against a volunteer, the matter should be reported to the Designated Person. Action taken in reporting an allegation against a volunteer should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith. All allegations should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the Health Board; this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern as outlined in Section Seven. The following steps should be taken:

- a. The first priority should be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The Designated Person should as a matter of urgency take the necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the volunteer, unless this action is necessary to protect children

- b. If a decision is made to report the matter to the Health Board, the Designated Person should follow the standard reporting procedure in respect of the young person. The Designated Person should inform the volunteer that an allegation has been made against him/her and explain the nature of that allegation. The volunteer should be afforded the right to respond. The response should be noted and passed to the Health Board if a formal report is being made. The Designated Person should also notify the Health Board of any other organisation working with children with which the alleged abuser is thought to be involved. The Health Board, if appropriate, will include these organisations in any investigation
- c. The parents/carers of the young person should be informed immediately unless by doing so, you endanger the young person. Advice should be taken from the statutory authorities as to how this might best be done
- d. The follow up on an allegation of abuse against a volunteer should be made in consultation with the Health Board and An Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting should be arranged with both agencies for this purpose
- e. After these consultations, and when pursuing the question of the future position of the volunteer, the Designated Person should advise the volunteer of the situation and agreed procedures should then be followed
- f. The Designated Person should ensure that any actions taken do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by the Health Board or An Garda Síochána. It is strongly recommended that the Designated Person maintain close liaison with authorities to ensure close co-operation between the parties.
- g. The person accused will need support pending an investigation. It would be unwise for this to be provided within the organisation, and external services should be accessible to the volunteer for this purpose.

### **Procedure to be followed where an Allegation is made against another Young Person**

If an allegation is made against another young person, it should be considered a Child Protection issue for both the young people involved and Child Protection Procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser. The parents/guardians of the young people concerned should be informed immediately. Advice should be taken from the Statutory Authorities as to how this might best be done. Decisions regarding the future participation in the YIFM of the young person alleged to have committed abuse should be made at management level.

### **Application of Fair Treatment**

Volunteers or employees about whom there are concerns should be treated fairly. They should be helped to understand the concerns expressed and the processes being operated, and be clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and its implications for their future employment or contractual arrangements with YIFM. The investigation should be completed as soon as possible.

The fact that legal action may not always be possible should not mean that action in relation to protecting children or disciplining the volunteer or employee should not be taken. It is important that allegations are thoroughly assessed and a decision reached.

# **CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES**

## **1. Abuse**

Young Irish Film Makers (YIFM) will protect all children and young people from abuse and neglect. Abuse is considered to be present when a child or young person is or has suffered from ill-treatment, whether physical or emotional, which may lead to impaired development.

All members of YIFM should have awareness that the abuser may be known to the child or young person and is often a person in a position of trust. The abuse may occur at home or on a YIFM course. If the abuse has occurred prior to the child's /young person's attendance with YIFM this must not be ignored and steps should be taken to address the issue.

## **2. Investigation and Reporting of Incidents**

All incidents of abuse will be fully investigated and a written report given. The initial investigation is usually very trying for the child or young person and guidelines as to how this should be handled are given below.

## **3. What happens next?**

YIFM will keep a record of all incidents along with their subsequent actions. This may take the form of disciplinary proceedings taking place on either staff, volunteers or company members. In any cases of actual or suspected abuse, outside agencies will become involved e.g. HSE, police, social services. In all cases, parents will be informed of the incident and told of the actions being taken.

## **Important Note regarding Recorded Material**

Video and photography is integral to the artistic nature of YIFM and we are aware that some concerns may be raised over taking both still and moving images of children and young people. We wish to reassure members and parents alike that YIFM takes its responsibility seriously in this respect.

Parents of all young members will have to sign permission forms to allow YIFM to use their image for the purpose of film production and distribution (including film festivals), publicity and internet promotion. All images of young members can only be recorded by staff or members of YIFM or persons authorised by YIFM.

Copyright will rest with YIFM and will be stored and used for YIFM purposes only. Film and Television companies can only use our material with YIFM authorisation.

## **Important Note regarding the Internet and Facebook**

While it is acknowledged that within YIFM the Internet is a useful tool for information and research, it is important that staff monitor all Internet use by members. All computers must be password protected and use by members can only be accessed through staff members. Staff members will be held responsible for security of all company computers in their charge.

Staff members should be in complete control of any engagement with members or other young people under the age of eighteen on Facebook or other social networks. Any member found to be responsible for serious misuse of computers or social networks (e.g. "fraping") will be asked to leave Young Irish Film Makers.

## **RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

YIFM will ensure that all young people, parents and staff are aware that any allegations will be taken seriously, quickly and thoroughly investigated in confidence and the findings reported to the necessary parties.

### **Dealing with Disclosure**

If a child discloses that s/he has been abused, the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully to what the child says without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child but do not make promises which it may not be possible to keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality - it may well be necessary to inform Social Services.
- Reassure the child that it is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it is right to tell.
- Listen, do not ask direct or leading questions.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator - the child may well still love him or her.
- Explain what you have to do next.
- Thank him or her for confiding in you.

### **Record Keeping**

When abuse is disclosed or suspected the member of staff should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible giving quotes if they can be recalled.
- Dates and times should be recorded.
- Notes should be factual and precise.
- These notes must not be destroyed, even if a more detailed report is later written. They may be needed in court.
- All Child Protection files are marked 'Strictly Confidential', and are kept separate from other YIFM records.
- Parents do not have access to Child Protection files.
- YIFM will keep Child Protection files for seven years.
- Do not carry out any physical examination if the abuse is thought to be physical or sexual.

### **If the alleged incident occurred before the young person arrived**

This situation needs very careful handling.

1. It may be necessary to speak to the HSE before speaking to the family and be led by them.
2. It is important that the young person is reassured of confidentiality but point out that certain people will have to be informed for their own safety.

3. Do not carry out any physical examination if the abuse is thought to be physical or sexual. If abuse is believed to have occurred, it may be necessary to contact the doctor for verification.

### **If the alleged abuse occurred on a Young Irish Film Makers course or activity**

1. After the initial discussion with the alleged abused young person, it will be necessary to speak to the alleged perpetrator to inform them of the accusation and any evidence provided.
2. The discussion procedure should follow that of the alleged abused young person.
3. All discussion should again be recorded, dated and signed.
4. Reassure the alleged perpetrator that no disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been thoroughly investigated.
5. Assure them that they will not be discussed (except in the case of proven gross misconduct) until an appeal from them has been considered.

### **If the allegation proves to be false**

1. Speak to the alleged abused and reassure them.
2. Try to discover the cause of the false accusation - malice, arguments and feelings of rejection
3. Discuss with the alleged abused the consequences of their false accusation.
4. Suggest that the person making the accusation apologise to the alleged perpetrator in the presence of the Workshop Leader/Artistic Director
5. Allow discussion of any problems between the two parties to resolve the situation
6. Reassure the alleged perpetrator that, although reported, no further action will be taken.

### **If the allegation proves to be well founded**

1. Again reassure the abused person of confidentiality and that the incident will be taken seriously.
2. Tell them that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident and inform them of any action that is taken as a result of the incident.
3. Parents should be informed.
4. If the perpetrator is a young member, the perpetrator's parents should be informed.
5. Discussion will be held between the Artistic Director and Operations Manager to determine the correct course of action.
6. If the incident (except in the case of gross misconduct) appears to be an isolated one, then the normal disciplinary proceedings may be taken i.e. warnings, removal from programme.
7. In the case of gross misconduct by a young company member, that person will be removed immediately from all YIFM programmes and activities.
8. In the situation where a member of staff is involved, that member of staff should be immediately suspended from their work with the young people. Appropriate disciplinary proceedings will be taken including dismissal if deemed appropriate by the Artistic Director and the police informed.
9. All actions should be recorded and in the case of dismissal from the company the person involved will receive in writing the reason for their dismissal.

### **Difficulties the alleged abused young person may find in reporting the alleged incident**

1. They will not be believed
2. They may believe they are to blame
3. They may not want the alleged perpetrator to get into trouble
4. They may be embarrassed or guilty
5. They may believe that they will be removed from home if the incident arose before they arrived at the YIFM course
6. They may believe that the abuse is 'normal'
7. They may have been threatened and are scared to report the incident

### **Difficulties the staff or other members of the Young Irish Film Makers may encounter before reporting an alleged incident**

1. Not believing the allegation
2. Shock, fear, denial
3. Not wanting to get 'involved'
4. Fear of the consequences
5. Not knowing how to handle the situation
6. Fear of mishandling the situation

### **What you should do**

1. Take seriously any accusation, stay calm and listen without interruption. Stay calm - try not to appear shocked with the allegation. Ensure that the child or young person is safe and feels safe. Reassure them that it is not their fault. Let them speak at their own pace.
2. Ensure that the young person understands that although the young person has spoken to you confidentially, it will be necessary to pass on the information but only to those who need to know
3. Only ask questions if the young person's explanation is not clear. Do not ask leading questions. Ask if anyone saw or was aware of the incident.
4. If the young person does not object, you should ensure that another member of staff is present. This person can then record all the details using the words the young person has used. These details should include the names of people involved, the date and time and the nature of the incident. At the conclusion of the interview, the resultant action should be recorded, the report signed and dated.
5. Young people often find it difficult to speak to members of staff. It may be suggested that a young member of YIFM attends the discussion to support the young person.
6. In some cases the young person may prefer to write down details of the incident. Anything written should be signed by the young person and the member of staff dealing with the alleged incident.
7. In every case, the young person should be reassured that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident and that they will be told of any resultant action.
8. Report any findings to the Designated Person
9. Ensure that remaining staff is aware that there is a problem which needs addressing. Do not give full details until the situation has been discussed with the Designated Person who will indicate those staff who need to know. They will decide whether outside agencies such as the HSE/Gardai should become involved.

## **Support**

Dealing with child protection is always difficult and stressful. Members of staff should consider seeking support for themselves, initially from the Designated Person.

### **Complaints and comments procedures**

All complaints/comments will be responded to within three weeks

The Operations Manager, Angela Walsh, will have responsibility for directing all complaints/comments to the appropriate person

Those making verbal complaints will be requested to put them in writing and direct them to Angela Walsh.

If they are unable to write, due to language or literacy difficulties, then the Designated Person or their assistant will write down the complaint, read it back to check accuracy and then ask the complainant(s) to sign it.

A complaint form is attached in Appendix 5.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

All members should be registered (name, phone, special requirements, emergency contact) and a roll should be called in each class or workshop session. The members register must be kept up to date. Members' details should only be available to staff members.

### **Arrangements for maintaining a safe and healthy working environment**

YIFM recognise that there are a number of hazards throughout the premises that require control to be exercised in order to maintain the health and safety of employees, volunteers, participants and other visitors. These controls and procedures are detailed as follows:

### **Accident Reporting**

A record of all accidents, however minor, should be entered in the accident book. **The Accident Book is kept in the main office.** Accident reports should be cross checked with members register.

All injuries should be reported immediately in order that repeat accidents can be prevented. 'Near Miss' accidents should be reported to the Operations Manager or senior member of staff on duty, immediately so that preventative measures can be taken.

### **Training**

All Health & Safety training needs will be identified by the Health & Safety Working Party in conjunction with the Operations Manager. Training will be provided, where appropriate, in areas of health and safety awareness, first aid, the use of protective equipment and safety devices and manual handling.

**The First Aid Officer is Kate St John.**

**First Aid Kits are located downstairs in the main office and upstairs in the small studio.**

### **Film and Theatre Electrical Equipment**

All users of film and theatre lighting, sound equipment and other electrical items must receive comprehensive instruction before they are allowed to operate the equipment.

Training will be given by YIFM's own senior technician, or by another technical member of staff. Members in technical workshops must also demonstrate the ability to adhere to health and safety procedures before being able to operate equipment unsupervised.

### **Activities with Young People**

Workshop leaders are responsible for leaving the workshop space clear of furniture at the end of every session. Chairs should be safely stacked and fire exits must be left clear of any obstructions. Leaders must ensure that fire exits remain clear during sessions when furniture may be moved around.

Leaders should consider the appropriateness of the activities to the age, class size, ability and experience of the young people they are working with in relation to health and safety issues.

Young people should be properly instructed in the use of any technical equipment and supervised where appropriate

Young people should be regularly reminded of their contribution to the health and safety of themselves and others. Disciplinary action will be taken when individuals disregard health and safety rules

Leaders must always consider health and safety issues in the design, construction and use of sets for film and theatre performance projects

Leaders should familiarise themselves with fire procedures and consider all health and safety issues when working at outreach venues

## **Fire**

YIFM will make every effort to reduce both the likelihood of fire and severity of fire, and consequently asks all staff, volunteers and participants to be vigilant and report anything that could be hazardous. Employees, volunteers & participants should familiarise themselves with the posted fire precautions and drill procedure. For regular workshop sessions, fire drills will take place on the first session of each new term. Workshop leaders should ensure anyone who misses the first session, or joins later in the term, is given a safety briefing the first time they attend.

Fire Evacuation Procedures:

- If you discover a fire - raise the alarm - do not attack the fire
- If you hear the fire alarm - leave the premises by the nearest available exit – close all doors behind you - report to person in charge at the assembly point – the designated area of the car park - who will check the register
- Call the fire brigade if you are the person previously designated to do so.

**DO NOT RETURN TO THE BUILDING UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD IT IS SAFE TO DO SO BY EITHER A FIREFIGHTER OR A MEMBER OF YIFM STAFF**

## **General Housekeeping**

One of the major contributions towards the maintenance of poor health and safety standards is bad housekeeping. Everyone has responsibility for ensuring that housekeeping is up to standard in the areas in which they work. All areas of the building should be kept tidy and free from clutter. Any potential health and safety issues should be reported immediately to the operations Manager or another member of YIFM staff.

## **General**

All staff will be guided through health and safety awareness and procedures at their induction. Members will be informed of health and safety issues relevant to them at group induction sessions.

Staff, volunteers & members are asked to consult the Operations Manager if they are in doubt concerning the implementation of safe working procedures or if they consider arrangements to be unsafe.

Employees, volunteers & participants must abide by the rules and regulations in force for the maintenance of a healthy and safe environment as detailed above. When health and safety is

disregarded it will be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors where disciplinary action may be recommended.

### **Monitoring**

The Operations Manager will ensure that working conditions are regularly monitored, ensuring that safe working practices are being followed. The Operations Manager is also responsible for investigating work-related accidents and is responsible for acting on findings from any such investigations to prevent a recurrence.

## **Appendix 1.**

# **ABUSE**

It is generally accepted that there are four categories of abuse but it must be remembered that abuse may occur in more than one category at any one time.

### **1. Neglect**

Signs to be aware of:

- a) A child is constantly hungry or secretes away food for later consumption
- b) A child who arrives dirty or inappropriately dressed for the weather conditions
- c) A child who appears to be grossly underweight and is constantly tired
- d) A child talks to others of being left unsupervised at inappropriate times

### **2. Physical**

Cuts and bruises are normal incidents in most children's lives. However, unexplained injuries, especially on areas of the body not normally exposed, could indicate physical abuse.

Signs to be aware of:

- a) Unexplained injuries on any part of the body
- b) Bruising
- c) Burns and scalds
- d) Bite marks or marks left by pinching
- e) Refusal to discuss injuries and implausible excuses for these
- f) Unwillingness for parents to be contacted if injuries occurred before the child arrived
- g) Aggression towards others
- h) Fear of treatment of injuries
- i) Withdrawn behaviour
- j) Flinching when approached or touched
- k) Arms and legs covered and an unwillingness to get changed
- l) If the abuse has occurred at home, a fear of returning there

### **3. Emotional**

This can be the result of the overprotective parent who will not allow the child to associate with other children. It may however arise when a child is belittled or ignored and receives no love or affection from parents/guardians especially when that affection is poured on to a sibling. The situation could also arise when preference is given to other company members.

Signs to be aware of:

- a) Over reaction to mistakes
- b) Aggression
- c) Bed wetting
- d) Fear of new situations
- e) Inferiority complex
- f) Neurotic behaviour

- g) Self-harming
- h) Attention-seeking
- i) Fear of parents being contacted

#### **4. Sexual**

Children or young people who have been sexually abused will exhibit physical and emotional behaviour which will give cause for concern. They should always be taken seriously and allowed to speak freely of their predicament. Very often they will find this very difficult to discuss as they may have been told that 'it is a secret' by the perpetrator and warned of the danger of not being believed.

Signs to be aware of:

- a) Physical difficult in walking or sitting, stomach pains
- b) Bruising
- c) Becoming either aggressive or withdrawn
- d) Eating problems
- e) Secretiveness
- f) Fear of being left with a certain person or group
- g) Sexual knowledge far above that which is normally expected of their age group.
- h) Sexually inappropriate behaviour with their peers and/or adults
- i) Self-harm
- j) Drug or alcohol abuse
- k) Obsessive washing
- l) Running away

The list of the above 'signs' is not exhaustive but is merely there to act as a guide. It should also be remembered that there may be other reasons for changes in behaviour pattern and these should be taken into consideration and investigated before reporting any concerns of abuse.

## Appendix 2.

### Young Irish Film Makers: Anti Bullying Code

The Young Irish Film Makers provides a place where

- Everyone can feel secure
- It is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour
- Name calling is not tolerated
- No one suffers abuse of any nature
- No one is victimised
- Each person who partakes in our activities is supported and listened to
- It is each participant's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equally where solutions to problems are the concern of all

### What is Bullying?

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

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

### Is Bullying Harmful?

Persistent bullying can have a devastating effect on a child's self esteem. They may feel It is somehow their fault, or that there's something wrong with them, they may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious, and less willing to take any sort of risk.

Being victimised in this way can cause days of mental anguish and leave lifelong emotional scars. It has driven some young people to try to murder their tormentors and others to suicide. A child who has suffered bullying often needs professional counselling to let out their feelings and rebuild their self-confidence. Bullying also affects any child who witnesses it.

### What do children get bullied about?

Some of the factors involved in bullying include:

- Puberty
- Peer pressure
- Gender differences
- Stereotypes / prejudice
- Structure of the group – hierarchy of dominance
- Family background of victims and bullies

*Bullying can be distinguished from bossiness and boisterous play. A bossy child will boss whoever is around. So often it is due to a lack of self-control or skills of negotiation or compromise. Boisterous play can be dangerous but it does not involve young people willfully setting out to hurt or victimise. Young people often grow out of this kind of behaviour as they grow older. What distinguishes bullying from bossiness or boisterousness is that the bully always picks on someone less powerful and more vulnerable. Persistent "slagging" has the same devastating effects as bullying and shouldn't be ignored.*

### **How would you know if a child is being bullied?**

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied.

- Reluctance to come to a centre or take part in activities
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- Stress-caused illnesses – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to activity, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of fees or shortage of money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

Of course, there are other possible reasons for many of the above.

### **What makes a person bully others?**

Bullies are often making a plea for help through their violent behaviour, which may reflect a sense of insignificance. Bullies whose activities go unaddressed often fail socially and academically later in life. They need to be taught all important negotiation and co-operative skills, working with others rather than competing.

### **How Young Irish Film Makers deals with bullying?**

**We implement the “no blame” approach as follows:**

#### **Step 1 – Interview the victim**

If you find out that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim.

At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal, physical, intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

#### **Step 2 – Meet with all involved**

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Just have maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a “special” meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you

like it done to you?

### **Step 3 – Explain the problem**

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame/initiators is not discussed. Explaining the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking these questions:

- “Would they like it if it happened to them?”
- “Someone here in this group was “bullied” by someone within the group. What can we do to see it does not happen again?”
- Listen, watch out for reactions and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

### **Step 4 – Share the responsibility**

Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.

### **Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas**

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways which would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

### **Step 6 – Leave it to them**

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

### **Step 7 – Meet them again**

Meet with each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again enforce the idea of the “team” looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known the bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

### **Appendix 3.**

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

**All Young Irish Film Makers staff must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct.**

YIFM actively encourages the safety and well-being of children and young people, and a caring culture and environment which supports this. We aim to create a safe and caring environment where children can enjoy rewarding and stimulating experiences.

YIFM will not tolerate an environment which allows bullying, racism or homophobia. Paid staff and all volunteers will, at all times, show loving care, respect and understanding for all members of our organisation regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or nationality.

### **Staff and others must never:**

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working.
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or

behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

**It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:**

- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these.
- plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks.
- as far as possible, avoid taking sessions on your own and be visible in working with children
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- **empower children** - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

**In general it is inappropriate to:**

- spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR STAFF**

1. All YIFM members should be treated with respect and have a right to privacy.
2. Be aware of any potential risks and report to the Designated Person any cause for concern. Risk assessments will be carried out by the Designated Person.
3. If a young person needs to be spoken to or requests to speak to you on their own, explain the necessity of a witness (another member of staff or one of their peers).
4. Never take a child to toilet areas in the absence of another staff member.
5. Be careful of how and where you touch a young person. Sometimes some affection is needed by the young person but this should be limited to a swift hug. Never pat a young person on the bottom. This is not only for the protection of the young person but mainly for the protection of the member of staff
6. Never use physical means of control without another member of staff being present. This could be misconstrued as assault even if the young person is in danger.

7. Take seriously any allegations of abuse, record them and report them for further investigation. Never trivialise or ignore accusations.
8. Do not spend excessive amounts of time with one particular child.
9. Give the young people an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have and ensure that the environment is conducive to discussions taking place.
10. Keep records of any false accusations against you or other members of staff
11. Record any touching or conversation of a sexual nature instigated by a young person whether with you or another member of staff. Never ignore these as they may be reported by the young person at a later date.
12. Never engage in or allow others to engage in inappropriate behaviour e.g. verbal, sexual, horseplay
13. Never make sexual comments or engage in sexual activity with the young person.
14. Never allow abusive or discriminatory behaviour from any company member. This includes discrimination because of faith, sexual orientation, race or colour.
15. Never give personal money to any member.
16. Never use alcohol or drugs when working.
17. Never undermine or criticise other members of staff.
18. Never put yourself in a compromising or potentially dangerous situation.
19. Do not rely on your good name to protect you.

STAFF SIGNATURE .....

DATE .....

**Appendix 4.**

**YOUNG IRISH FILM MAKERS**

Employment Application Form

**1. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU HOLD A CURRENT FULL DRIVING LICENCE? : \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU OWN A CAR? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Date School/College/University Course/Qualification

**3. PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

Dates Employer's Name Position Held/Duties

**4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION**

(Interests and skills e.g. drama, outdoor activities, manual skills, group work, previous volunteer work etc.)

**5. YOUR MOTIVATION**

In no more than one hundred words, please explain why you want to work for Young Irish Film Makers.

**6. COMPUTER SKILLS**

**7. DO YOU SUFFER FROM ANY ILLNESS OR DISABILITY? YES/NO**

(If yes, please give details:)

**8. DO YOU HAVE A POLICE RECORD OR ARE THERE ANY LEGAL ACTIONS CURRENTLY BEING TAKEN AGAINST YOU? YES/NO**

(If yes, please give details:)

**9. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY REASON WHY YOU SHOULD NOT WORK WITH CHILDREN?**

YES/NO (If “yes”, please give details:)

**10. DO YOU CONSENT TO GARDA CLEARANCE? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_**

**11. REFEREES** Please give the names and contact details of two referees who are not relatives and who can comment on your suitability for a position working with children.

**DECLARATION:**

**It is important that you read this declaration carefully and then sign.**

“I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief that there is nothing in relation to my conduct, character or personal background of any nature that would adversely effect the position of trust in which I would be placed by virtue of this appointment. I hereby confirm my irrevocable consent to the Young Irish Film Makers to making such enquiries as YIFM deem necessary in respect of my suitability for the post in respect of which this application is made. I hereby accept and confirm the entitlement of YIFM to reject my application or to terminate my employment (in the event of a contract of employment having been entered into) if I have omitted to furnish YIFM with any information relevant to my application or my continued employment with YIFM or where I have made any false statement or misrepresentation relevant to this application or my continuing employment with the YIFM”.

Furthermore, I hereby declare that all the particulars furnished on this application are true, and that I am aware of the qualifications and particulars for this position. I understand that I may be required to submit documentary evidence in support of any particulars given by me on my application form. I understand that any false or misleading information submitted by me will render me liable to automatic disqualification”.

**Failure to sign the application form will render it invalid.**

**SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Angela Walsh, Young Irish Film Makers, St. Joseph’s Studios, Waterford Road, Kilkenny.

**Appendix 5.**

**YOUNG IRISH FILM MAKERS**

Child Protection Policy

Complaint Form

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please describe briefly the issue / incident which has caused you concern:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please give us the names and contact details of any witnesses:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

