



Rainbows Ireland

Supporting Children and Young People with
Bereavement and Parental Separation

Child Safeguarding Policy

July 2025

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Glossary

Child Safeguarding – ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by workers and volunteers to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, should these arise. Child safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential.

Child Safeguarding Statement – defined in the Children First Act 2015, this is a statement which includes a written assessment of risk of harm to children and the measures that will be taken to manage any identified risks.

Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures – previously referred to as Child Safeguarding and welfare policy and procedures, the procedures an organisation has in place to safeguard children from harm and reduce the risks to children of being harmed.

Child or young person – a person under the age of 18 years, who is not or has not been married.

Child Safeguarding and Welfare Report Form – form for use in reporting suspected or alleged abuse or welfare concerns to Tusla (available at www.tusla.ie).

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children – national, overarching guidance for the protection and welfare of children, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The current version was published in 2017.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) – a resource to any worker member who has a Child Safeguarding concern. DLPs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies (see Children First: National Guidance).

Mandated person – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

Named person – a person appointed by an organisation to lead the development of guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice as detailed in this Guide.

‘Parent’ or guardian applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child

Provider – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means, in relation to a relevant service, a person-

- a) who provides a relevant service, and
- b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service—
- c) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service,
- d) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service or permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service’.

Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF) – form for use in reporting to Tusla suspected or alleged retrospective abuse or welfare concerns, on adults who allege childhood abuse (available at www.tusla.ie).

Relevant person – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider’s Child Safeguarding Statement’.

Relevant service – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act]’.

Staff applies to members of employed persons in Rainbow’s and/or employed persons in Rainbows registered programme centres

Tusla – Tusla is Ireland’s Child and Family Agency, the lead, statutory organisation for safeguarding children in Ireland.

Worker and volunteer – inter alia, any worker, volunteer, member of any board of management, engaged in an organisation to provide services to children or families.

Rainbows Ireland Programme Centre’s: Programme centres where the Governance is completely under Rainbows Ireland and is not part of any inter agency model of service delivery

Shared Partnership - refers to Schools both Primary and Secondary, Family Resources centres, School Completion Projects, Youth organizations and peer services with whom Rainbows Ireland has agreed and signed Service Level agreements that identify and clarify key governance roles and responsibilities in the partnership structure. The agreed and signed Service Level agreement sets out the policies and procedures in relation to the six best practice themes outlined in this Safeguarding Policy for shared partnership registered Rainbows Centres.

Introduction

Child Safeguarding & Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Board and Staff Team of Rainbows Ireland understands Child Safeguarding to be:

The action that is taken at all times by Rainbows Ireland to promote the welfare of children/young people and protect them from harm.

In summary, Rainbows Ireland understands that the term 'safeguarding' refers to the protection of children from harm as well as the promotion of their welfare and development whilst in our care.

Name of service: Rainbows Ireland

Nature of service: Rainbows Ireland provides peer group support for children and young people who are experiencing grief and loss following a bereavement and /or following the impact of parental separation, or divorce.

This document gives guidance regarding policies and procedures to be followed in both Rainbows Ireland Head Office and our shared partnerships with Rainbows Ireland Registered Centres.

Theme 1: Guiding principles

The Board of Rainbows Ireland has adopted and will implement fully and without modification these key documents as part of the overall Child Safeguarding Policy and procedure will be reviewed every two years.

In accordance with the requirements of the

- Children First Act 2015,
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017,
- Tulsa's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedures and Practice
- Child Care Act 1991/protection for persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998/National Vetting Bureau Act 2012

Declaration of Guiding Principles

Here at **Rainbows Ireland Child and Youth Grief and Loss Support**, we provide the following services to children/young people:

Peer group support for children and young people experiencing the impact of bereavement and or parental separation.

1.1 Beliefs, values, and codes of the organisation

The Board of Rainbows Ireland recognises that child safeguarding and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of the Rainbows service and must be reflected in all policies, procedures, practices and activities.

We believe 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
- The welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends our service is paramount.

We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard

- It is the intention of Rainbows Ireland to keep children safe from harm.
- Rainbows Ireland is dedicated to safeguarding children as an utmost priority.
- Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation
- All staff /volunteers/board of management must sign up and abide by these guiding principles and our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the Rainbows service will adhere to the following principles of best practice in Child Safeguarding and welfare.

1.2 Commitment to compliance with national legislation and policy

Board, staff and volunteers in this service recognise that the welfare of children is paramount. In both Rainbows Ireland Programme Centres and in shared partnership centres, the Rainbows Ireland service will endeavour to safeguard children by:

Rainbows Ireland **Child Safeguarding Statement** includes a list of the potential risk of harm to children and the procedures that are in place to manage any risk identified, including the following specified procedures:

- a) The selection or recruitment of any person as a member of staff or Volunteer in Rainbows
- b) Any member of staff /vol who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the relevant service,
- c) The provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to members of staff /vol in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm,
- d) For reporting to Tusla by a member of staff /vol of the (whether a mandated person or otherwise) in accordance with the Act or the guidelines issued by the Minister under section 6,
- e) Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (in the relevant service who are mandated persons, and
- f) For appointing a relevant person for the purposes of this Part

1.3 Who our guiding principles are for:

The Guiding Principles are for all, in both Shared Partnership and in Registered Centres, Rainbows Ireland Board, staff and volunteers, Facilitators, Coordinators, shared partnership registered Programme Centres, and the Board of Registered Ireland Programme Centres - within Rainbows Ireland who have regular contact with children and families, directly or indirectly.

This also includes children/young people who attend Rainbows are aged from 7 to 16 years of age and have experienced either a bereavement and or parental separation.

The guiding principles are communicated to all listed above as part of induction, training, Rainbows Registered Centre Agreements and information in relation to the Rainbows service.

Theme 2: Key roles in safeguarding

2.1 Named Persons

A named person designated with lead responsibility for the development, review and implementation of guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures has been appointed by the Board of Rainbows Ireland: **Geraldine Kelly | CEO**

This named person will liaise with all staff, key workers and volunteer Facilitators and Coordinators, who have relevant roles and responsibilities.

2.2 Designated Liaison Persons

In Rainbows Registered Centres

The Board of Rainbows Ireland have appointed Geraldine Kelly Rainbows CEO, as DLP for all Rainbows Registered Programme Centres. This person will assist in the review process.

The Deputy DLP is the Office Manager in relation to the processing of Garda Vetting and a member of the Board | Ray Watson (in relation to direct child welfare concerns).

- All named people have received DLP training directly from Tusla at regular 3 year intervals
- Agreed procedures are in place that both are accessible outside working hours
- All named people are aware of their responsibility for making sure that the reporting procedure within the organisation is followed so that suspected cases of child abuse or neglect are referred promptly to Tusla or, in an emergency and the unavailability of Tusla, to An Garda Síochána.

In Shared Partnership Registered Rainbows Programme Centre

The DLP in shared partnership centres is the designated DLP at that centre.

All Boards of Management sign a Service Level Agreement with Rainbows Ireland. This agreement states that the designated DLP of each Rainbows registered programme centre is responsible for all safeguarding policy and procedures.

2.2.3 Roles and responsibilities of DLP/Deputy DLP

- Be fully familiar with your Rainbows Ireland's duties in relation to the safeguarding of children.
- Have good knowledge of Rainbows Ireland's guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Ensure that Rainbows Ireland's reporting procedure is followed, so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from workers and volunteers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary.
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of the Rainbows Ireland Programme Centre, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form, through the online portal
- Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless:
- Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child or young person;

- Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
- The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to your attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Each registered Programme centre will ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, as appropriate.
- Where requested, jointly report with a mandated person/facilitator
- Process all Garda Vetting of Registered Rainbows Centres (Centre Director, Coordinator, Facilitators) and staff team in Head Office including 'relevant' Board members in line with the National Vetting Bureau.

2.3 Mandated Persons

The Children First Act 2015 contains a list of classes of mandated persons.

The Children First Act 2015 requires all providers of relevant services to have a procedure in place to maintain a list of any mandated persons in their organisation. Rainbows Ireland procedure can be found in APPENDIX 1 of this document

Mandated persons' responsibility to report

Mandated persons are required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concern that meets or exceeds the threshold for reporting under the legislation.

It is important to note that the statutory obligation of mandated persons to report under the Children First Act 2015 **must be discharged by the mandated person** and cannot be discharged by the DLP on their behalf.

Mandated persons will make a joint mandated report with their DLP. If, however, Rainbows DLP, does not wish to report to Tusla, you, as a mandated person, should proceed with making a report. The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 will apply in this instance.

Where a mandated person has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should consider whether the concern meets reasonable grounds for concern. If the mandated person thinks the concern does meet reasonable grounds for concern, they should report the concern to their DLP. The mandated person retains their right to report independently, should the DLP choose not to report the concern. The provisions of the Protections Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 would apply in this circumstance.

In this section the term 'harm' is used as defined in the Children First Act 2015: "'harm' means, in relation to a child—:

- (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or
- (b) sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise".

Under the Children First Act 2015, certain classes of professionals are designated as mandated persons.

Section 14(1) of the Children First Act 2015 states:

“...where a Mandated Persons knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child—

(a) has been harmed,

(b) is being harmed, or

(c) is at risk of being harmed,

he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to [Tusla].”

Also, Section 14(2) of the Children First Act 2015 places obligations on mandated persons to report any disclosures made by a child:

“Where a child believes that he or she—

(a) has been harmed,

(b) is being harmed, or

(c) is at risk of being harmed,

and discloses this belief to a mandated person in the course of a mandated person’s employment or profession as such a person, the mandated person shall, ... as soon as practicable, report that disclosure to Tusla.”

The DLP is informed of all such reports; both in Shared Partnership and in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres.

Note:

Rainbows Facilitators and Coordinator may be mandated in their professional role, but in their voluntary role in Rainbows they are not mandated

In Rainbows Ireland Registered Centres:

The DLP of Rainbows Ireland is the mandated person.

In Shared Partnership Registered Rainbows Programme Centre:

In shared partnered registered programme centres, the DLP may be the mandated person under the policy and procedures of Rainbows Ireland.

2.4 Other roles

Additional roles are identified under the Children First Act 2015, including:

- Provider of a relevant service;
- Relevant person.

2.4.1 Provider of a relevant service

The Children First Act 2015 defines a 'provider' as "a person—

1. Rainbows Ireland provides a relevant service,
2. in respect of the provision of this relevant service by Rainbows Ireland,
 - a) Rainbows Ireland employs both under contract of employment and recruitment of volunteers, to undertake the work and activity that constitutes a relevant service,
 - b) Rainbows Ireland enters into a contract for services with Rainbows Registered Programme Centres only, in the provision of a relevant service
 - c) Rainbows Ireland does not permit any person, whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme, to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of Rainbows Ireland

2.4.2 Relevant person

The relevant person is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.

Anne Staunton is the appointed Relevant Person for all Rainbows Registered Programme Centres, **not in shared partnership centres**, as under the Children First Act 2015.

The procedure for appointing a relevant person is found in appendix 2.

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Theme 3: Responding to and reporting Child Safeguarding or welfare concerns

3.1 Roles and responsibilities in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres

All staff, volunteer Facilitator and Coordinators, DLP's, have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and to report any concerns they may have for the protection or welfare of a child/young person. Regardless of how a concern comes to a worker/volunteer's attention.

3.1.1 Roles and responsibilities in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

All staff, volunteer Facilitator and Coordinators, DLP's, have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and to report any concerns they may have for the protection or welfare of a child/young person. Regardless of how a concern comes to a worker/volunteer's attention.

3.2 Categories and Indicators of abuse

Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children defines four categories of abuse: **neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse**. A child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children states that "Tusla should always be informed when a person **has reasonable grounds for concern** that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected".

Reasonable grounds for a Child Safeguarding or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

The four types of abuse are:

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual child abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse

3.3 Role of Rainbows Facilitators in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres

Where a Rainbows Facilitator knows, believes, or has reasonable grounds of concern, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report to the Coordinator of a Rainbows programme centre.

3.3.1 Role of Rainbows Facilitators in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

Where a Rainbows Facilitator knows, believes, or has reasonable grounds of concern, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report to the Coordinator of a Rainbows programme centre.

3.3.2 Role of Rainbows Coordinators in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres

The Rainbows Coordinator will report any child safeguarding matter being reported by a Rainbows Facilitator to the Rainbows DLP of the programme centre.

3.3.3 Role of Rainbows Coordinators in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

The Rainbows Coordinator will report any child safeguarding matter being reported by a Rainbows Facilitator to the Rainbows DLP of the programme centre.

3.3.4 Role of DLP in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres

The Rainbows DLP, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the DLP will report to the Tusla Duty Social Worker.

If the DLP decides not to make a report, the worker/volunteer with the reasonable concern is still entitled to make a report to Tusla under Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, should they wish to do so. The individual worker has protections under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

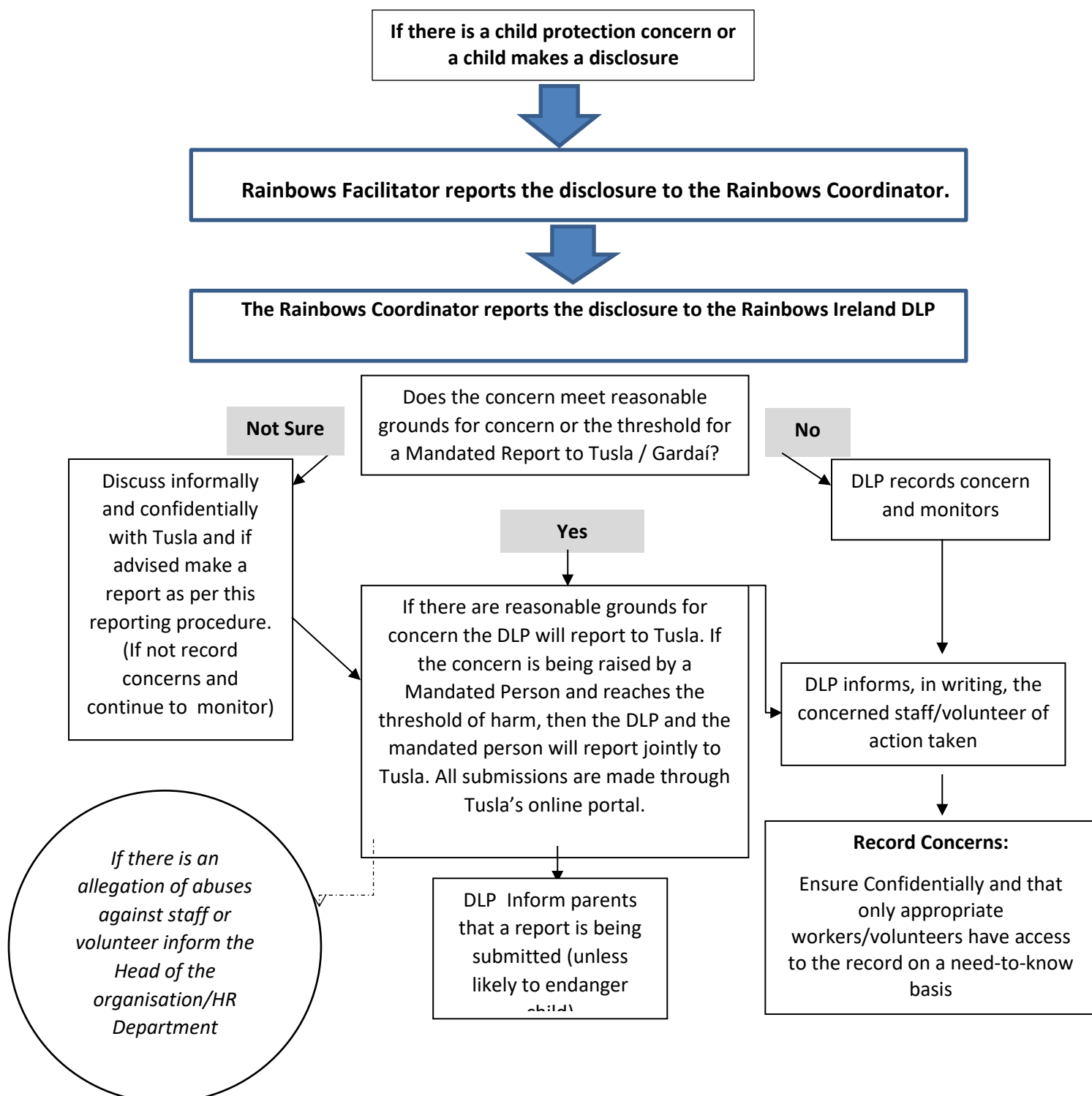
3.3.5 Role of DLP in Rainbows Ireland in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

The Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres, the Designated Liaison Person in each Rainbows Registered Programme Centre, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the Designated Liaison Person will report to the Tusla Duty Social Worker.

If the DLP decides not to make a report, the worker/volunteer with the reasonable concern is still entitled to make a report to Tusla under *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, should they wish to do so. The individual worker has protections under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

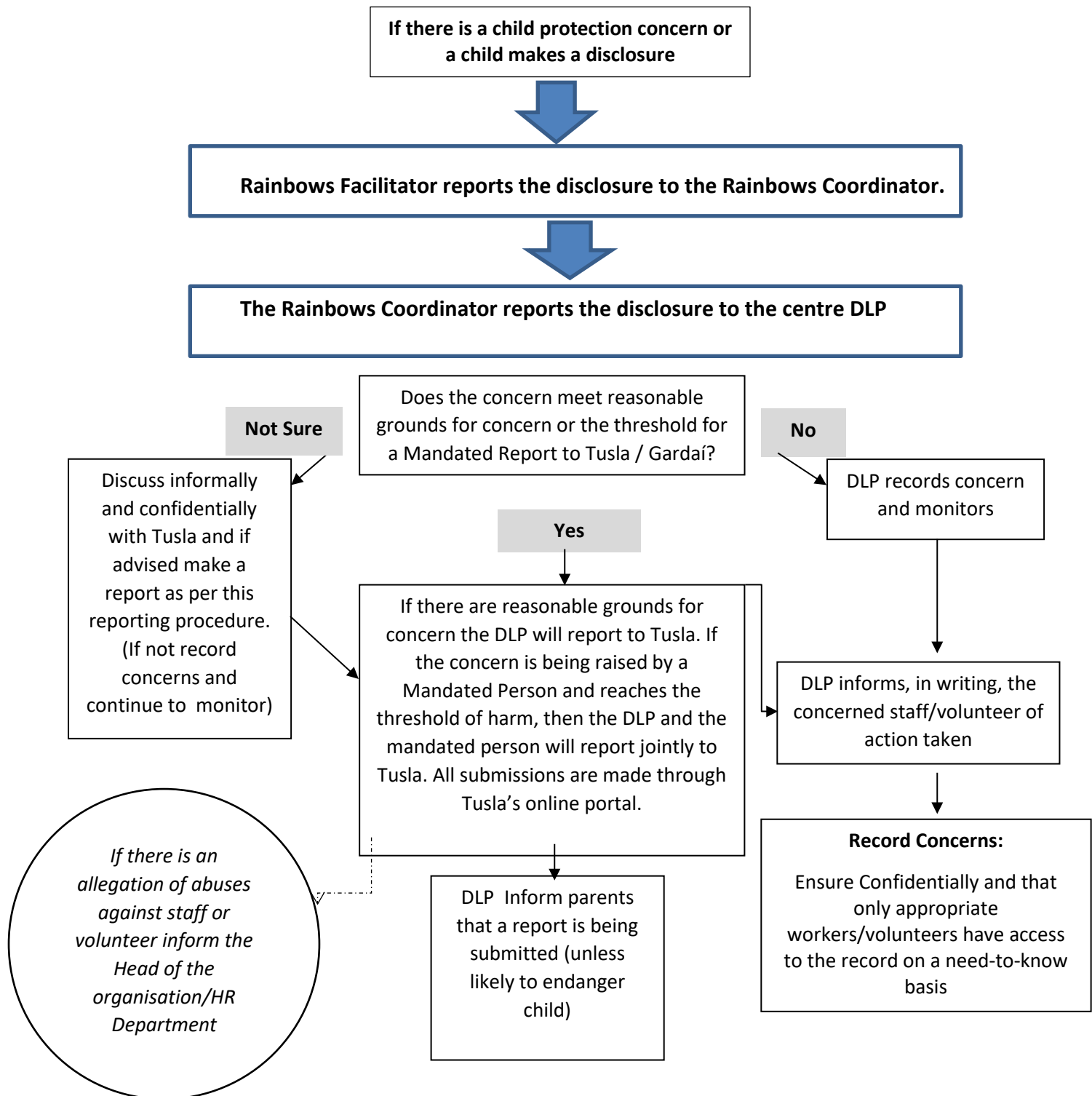
3.4 Rainbows Ireland diagram for reporting procedures in Rainbows Registered Programme Centres



Mandated persons are required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concerns that meets or exceeds the threshold of harm as defined in the Act.

Our reporting procedures outline that the mandated person will report jointly with the DLP. However, the Statutory obligations of mandated persons cannot be discharged by the DLP on their behalf. The Mandated person maintains their right to report independently, should the DLP choose not to report the concern.

3.4.1 Rainbows Ireland diagram for reporting procedures in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres



Mandated persons are required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concerns that meets or exceeds the threshold of harm as defined in the Act.

Our reporting procedures outline that the mandated person will report jointly with the DLP. However, the Statutory obligations of mandated persons cannot be discharged by the DLP on their behalf. The Mandated person maintains their right to report independently, should the DLP choose not to report the concern.

3.5 Child Protection and Welfare Report Form or Retrospective Abuse Report Form in both Rainbows Registered programme centre and in Shared Partnership Registered Programme Centres

The DLP has responsibility to complete the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form or the Retrospective Report Form. All submissions are submitted through Tusla's online portal.

If in doubt if a concern reached the legal definition of harm for making a mandated report. Tusla can provide advice. Contact Tusla out-of-hours social work service on 0818 776 315 between 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

If you cannot contact Tusla and have an immediate concern about the safety of a child, please contact An Garda Síochána.

3.6 Information sharing and record-keeping in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- Records will only be shared on a need-to-know basis in the best interests of the child/young person
- All Rainbows Ireland Programme Centres and at Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Centres will cooperate if requested, in the sharing of records with Tusla when in relation to a Child Safeguarding or welfare issue
- All Rainbows Ireland Programme Centres and at Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Centres, ensure that all records pertaining to Child Safeguarding are kept securely and safely within all Rainbows Ireland Programme Centres and at Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Centres.
- Records should only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- The DLP only has access to all records.
- Records are stored at Rainbows Ireland Programme Centres and at Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Centres in a secure location with encrypted access only
- All Child Safeguarding records are held in hard copy for twenty-one years at Rainbows Ireland Programme Centres and at Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Centres

3.6.1 Confidentiality

- All information in relation to families and participants accessing the Rainbows programme is confidential on a 'need to know' basis, in the best interest of the child/young person with the relevant statutory authorities and with parents/guardians.
- Confidentiality procedures are outlined at the start of each Rainbow Session for group participants.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given
- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies necessary for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

- Parents/guardians and children/young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk or may put the reporter at risk.

3.7 Responding to concerns in both Rainbows Ireland registered programme centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

Responding to a child/young person who discloses abuse

A child or young person may disclose to a worker or volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children/young people will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child or young person hints at or tells a worker or volunteer that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/guardian, another adult or by another child/young person (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

A child/young person may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child/young person.
- Remember, the child or young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child/young person has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child/young person. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the child or young person has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child/young person quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgment on, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking with the child/young person
- It may be necessary to reassure the child/young person that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

When asking questions

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation.

Confidentiality – Do not promise to keep secrets

At the earliest opportunity, tell the child/young person that:

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you.
- You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further on-going hurt.
- You refuse to make a commitment to secrecy to the child/young person, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything (or, indeed, anything) there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child/young person's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest it is more likely that the child/ young person will return to you at another time.

Think before you promise anything – do not make promises you cannot keep

At the earliest possible opportunity:

- Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child/young person has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child/young person.
- Inform the Rainbows Coordinator at the programme centre
- The Rainbows Coordinator immediately informs the programme centre DLP
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

On-going support

Following a disclosure by a child/young person, the Facilitator will continue to maintain a supportive relationship with the child/young person. Disclosure is a huge step for a child/young person. The Facilitator should continue to offer support, particularly by:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child/young person.
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child/young person.
- Continuing to include the child/young person in the usual activities.
- Any further disclosure will be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as indicated above. Where necessary, immediate action will be taken to ensure the child/young person's safety.

If a child who has made a disclosure in one week, does not return to the Rainbows programme, this should be brought to the immediate attention of the programme centre DLP.

3.7.1 Responding to adults who disclose childhood abuse in both Rainbows Ireland registered Programme Centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- It is imperative that all Child Safeguarding concerns are examined and addressed.
- An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood.
- If a worker or volunteer becomes aware of a retrospective concern, they should follow the reporting procedure and speak with the DLP.
- The DLP should informally consult with the Duty Social Worker
- If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the service should submit a report to the Tusla Portal without delay
- Information about relevant support services may be provided to the adult if appropriate.

3.7.2 Responding to allegations of abuse made against workers /volunteers in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- The protection and welfare of the children in the Rainbows service are paramount and their safety and well-being is the priority. However, Rainbows Ireland also has a duty and responsibility, as a governing Board, in respect of its employees and volunteers.
- It is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an employee:
 - Reporting procedure in respect of any Child Safeguarding and welfare concern
 - The procedure in respect to the allegation against the employee
- In small staff teams, it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the parties e.g. The Chairperson of the Board of a Rainbows programme centre or if a Rainbows staff member, the Chairperson of Rainbows Ireland.
- In general, it is the Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for reporting the matter to Tusla (as per the reporting procedure) while the Rainbows Board of Management is responsible for addressing the employment issues.
- If the concern meets the reasonable grounds for reporting, then it should be referred without delay to Tusla.

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/young person
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person
- Behaved towards a child/young person or children/young people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/young person
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to the organization's code of behaviour for workers and volunteers
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines.

If an allegation is made against a worker/volunteer in Rainbows Ireland, we will ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the Rainbows Ireland guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and adhering to 'the rules of natural justice and any relevant employment law. Rainbows Ireland in has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the worker/volunteer

3.7.3 Reporting allegations of abuse made against Rainbows Ireland Staff/volunteer Facilitators and Coordinators in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres, to Tusla

- The Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centre chairperson or the chairperson of Shared Partnership Registered Rainbow's Programme Centres must be alerted to the allegation by the reporter
- The priority is for the safety of the child/young person; management must make sure no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk
- Parents/guardians should be informed of any action planned while having regard to the confidentiality rights of others, such as the person against whom the allegation has been made.

3.7.4 Internal procedures for dealing with an allegation against a worker or a volunteer in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

In the context of an allegation of abuse against a worker/volunteer, the Rainbows Ireland disciplinary procedures should ensure that fair procedure is followed and take account of the employment contract as well as the rules of natural justice:

- In making an immediate decision about the worker's/volunteer's presence in Rainbows, the Rainbows CEO/Board of Management should as a matter of urgency take any measures necessary to protect the child/young person. These should be proportionate to the level of risk to the child/young person; 'protective measures' do not presume guilt.
- The Rainbows CEO/ Board of Management should privately inform the worker/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him or her and the nature of the allegation.
- The worker/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Rainbows CEO/ Board of Management should note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla. The worker/volunteer should be offered the option to have representation at this stage, under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.
- Rainbows Ireland is aware that Tusla will not provide advice on employment matters, Rainbows Ireland will contact Tusla for advice and consultation with regard to risk to children/young people
- The Rainbows CEO/ Board of Management will ensure that actions taken by the organisation do not frustrate or undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. Rainbows Ireland will liaise closely with the investigating bodies to ensure this.
- Rainbows Ireland understands the requirements of fair procedure and natural justice mean that Tusla usually will not share the detail of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a worker/volunteer until the worker/volunteer has had an opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions of Tusla.

See appendix 7 for Rainbows Ireland procedure for addressing allegation of abuse against staff/volunteers

Whistle-blower:

In relation to Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centre and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres, the policy on Whistleblowing, will apply to all centres. APPENDIX 3

Theme 4: Working safely with children

4.1. Safe recruitment and selection

The Board of Rainbows Ireland recruits volunteers for Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres only.

4.1.1 Procedures for recruiting and selecting workers and volunteers for Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres only

- Step 1: Review volunteer application form
- Step 2: Interview and volunteers
- Step 3: Check references x 2
- Step 4: Follow up phone call for references
- Step 5: Complete Garda Vetting
- Step 6: Application procedure for Facilitator training
- Step 7: Attend Facilitator Training
- Step 8: Programme delivery probation procedure (over 2 programme delivery periods)
- Step 9: Formally appointed as a trained Rainbows Ireland Facilitator

4.1.2 Procedures for recruiting and selecting workers and volunteers in Shared Partnership Registered Rainbows Programme Centres

The Boards of Management in Shared Partnership Registered Programme Centres, are responsible for the recruitment and selection of volunteers and staff, using the Rainbows Ireland recruitment policy and procedures.

- Step 1: Review volunteer application form
- Step 2: Interview and volunteers
- Step 3: Check references x 2
- Step 4: Follow up phone call for references
- Step 5: Complete Garda Vetting
- Step 6: Application procedure for Facilitator training
- Step 7: Attend Facilitator Training
- Step 8: Programme delivery probation procedure (over 2 programme delivery periods)
- Step 9: Formally appointed as a trained Rainbows Ireland Facilitator

4.1.3 Vetting by the National Vetting Bureau

Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 all people working with children and vulnerable adults are required to undergo vetting. Rainbows Ireland is an authorized signatory to vet applicants who will be working directly with children with the National Vetting Bureau prior to appointment and commencement of work. Rainbows Ireland has two dedicated Liaison Persons with the National Vetting Bureau .

Separate Garda Vetting is needed for the work of Rainbows, irrespective of other clearances a Coordinator/Facilitator may have. Rainbows Ireland conducts all Garda Vetting for Rainbows Ireland registered centres and shared partnership registered centres through the eVetting system.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 came into effect on the 29th of April 2016. Under this Act, it is important to note that there is **a legal requirement** for both Rainbows Ireland and Rainbows Ireland Volunteers to be vetted before commencing any volunteer work and all applicants must provide proof of identity.

Centre Directors in all Registered Rainbow Centres will act as the 'Validator' when Coordinators and Facilitators are engaging in the Garda Vetting process. Where the Centre Director is the Coordinator, their line manager (Chai/ CEO) must validate their Garda Vetting form. This means, they will:

1. In person, verify the Proof of ID
2. In Person verify the Proof of Residence
3. In Person, verify the wet signature of the applicant on the NVB Form
4. Complete all parts of the NVB part indicated for the Validator and sign themselves also
5. Post the hard copy of the NVB Form to Rainbows Ireland Head Office for the attention of the Office Manager – Dedicated Liaison Person.
6. File securely under their own Centre's GDPR Policies for 6 months, the hard copies of the two ID forms the applicant submitted.

Rainbows Ireland Head Office are responsible for validating all staff, board, Coordinators and facilitators working in Head Office and 'stand-alone' Rainbows Centres. This means the DLP in Head Office will in person:

1. Verify proof of ID
2. Verify proof of Residency
3. Verify wet signature
4. File securely all documents in line with GDPR for 6 months (hard copies)
5. Sign as Validator on the NVB form
6. File the NVB form, hard copy for 6 months in line with GDPR

In light of an inspection by the National Garda Vetting Unit, all of the above documents and transparency in processing the above must be evident in both Registered Public Rainbows Centres and in Rainbows Head Office.

Rainbows Ireland holds all NVB forms in hard copy as per legislation for 6 months following their submission to Head Office and then they are shredded in line with GDPR.

All digital Disclosures forms from the National Garda Vetting Unit are on file for 3 years (the duration of validity). If the Coordinator/Facilitator becomes inactive during this term, their file will be removed from our database. All staff /Board and 'stand-alone' registered centres files will be held in accordance with our GDPR retention policy guidelines.

Documentation Requirements for Overseas Residence

If a volunteer lived abroad for one year and one day or longer after the age of 18, (working or not), the volunteer must provide a certified copy of a Certificate of Criminal Clearance for each country where they have lived for one year and one day or longer with your application. If they obtained police clearance for a country some time ago and have not returned to live in that country, they may submit a certified copy of that document.

Please contact the embassy / consulate for the relevant country for details on how to obtain a certificate of criminal clearance.

4.2 Developing a child safeguarding training strategy

The aim of child safeguarding training is to provide:

- Guidance on how to recognise child abuse
- Guidance on responding appropriately to Child Safeguarding or welfare concerns
- Information on the importance of working together to protect children/young people
- Information on the importance of agencies developing effective child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices
- Information on Rainbows Ireland's guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

4.2.1. Training strategy: In both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- All staff, volunteers (Coordinators, Facilitators) complete the Tusla Children First eLearning Safeguarding training module.
- Certificate of completion is held for all staff and volunteers at the Rainbows National Office on our secure Dashboard.
- Rainbows 4 day Facilitation Training includes a module on Child safeguarding training
- Facilitators – two per group agree and sign a Co-Facilitation working contract – this includes detailed role and responsibility for each Facilitator in the event of a disclosure or welfare concern in the group
- Coordinators revise the role and responsibility of all Facilitators at the start of every programme
- CPD includes an in-house Child Safeguarding component
- Training needs are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Rainbows CEO
- The Rainbows CEO meets and reviews all safeguarding policies and procedures with Tusla Information and advice officers for Children First
- Training for DLPs and Deputy DLPs at Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres is accessed through Tusla D.L.P. training strategy
- Training for DLPs and Deputy DLPs at Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres is accessed through their agency/organisation training strategy e.g., Dept of Education

4.2.2 Ensuring safeguarding training is consistent with Children First

Rainbows Ireland CEO will at all times liaise with Tusla Child Information and advice officers for Children First to ensure that the content of all training delivered in house is consistent with Children

First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, the Children First Act 2015 and Tulsa's Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes

4.2.3 Keeping training records

Rainbows Ireland National Office maintains a database of all training records, including all volunteers and staff in all Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres. Training records include:

- Date and name of training programmes delivered
- Names of staff /Facilitators and Coordinators who completed training and the Rainbows programme centre they represent
- Number of staff Facilitators and Coordinators trained nationally, including detailed by each county
- Training programmes completed by each staff/Facilitator, Coordinator, trainer to include date and venue and details of trainers
- The names of the Facilitators and Coordinators who delivered the programme at each programme in a Rainbows programme centre
- Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres, a signed receipt of all workers / Facilitators, Coordinators, trainers, have been given a copy of Rainbows declaration of guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

4.3 Safe management of Peer group support in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres

Part of keeping children and young people safe and reducing the likelihood of harm is having clear guidelines in place regarding how activities are organised and run. The following procedures are in place for the safety of children from arrival to departure at all Rainbows programme centres.

- Sign in and out sheets
- Attendance records
- Agreed details by both parents of emergency contacts and three people agreed that can collect their child/children
- There is an agreed policy and procedure for a child or young person to leave the group in both Rainbows Ireland and in shared registered programme centres, that is if the group support is not meeting the needs of a child or young person at a particular time

4.3.1 Safe management of Peer group support in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

The records of the following are held as part of the records maintained, as agreed in the Service Level Agreement, in all Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Centres in line with the GDPR of each Registered Centre.

- Sign in and out sheets
- Attendance records
- Agreed details by both parents of emergency contacts and three people agreed that can collect their child/children

- There is an agreed policy and procedure for a child or young person to leave the group in both Rainbows Ireland and in shared registered programme centres, that is if the group support is not meeting the needs of a child or young person at a particular time

In both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres the following apply (in line with GDPR of each Registered Centre) :

- Records of children are kept until children reach 21 years of age + 6 years at the programme centre
- Enrolment forms and consent forms
- Attendance records
- Sign in and sign out sheets
- Accidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to senior management)
- Incidents
- Any complaints or grievances
- All Child Safeguarding records
- All Facilitator and Coordinator with contact details including which programme centre they are attached are maintained on a National Database
- All Garda Vetting details and records for Rainbows Ireland centres and in shared partnership programme centres, are maintained on a separate Garda Vetting Database at National office

4.3.2 Keeping a register of children in Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres

These records are held by the Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme Centres in line with their GDPR policies.

- The Rainbows Participant Enrolment form is completed with all relevant details for each child attending a Rainbows programme.
- This includes the name, address and contact details of parents and the signed consent of both parents (waivers apply)

4.3.3 Keeping a register of children in Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

These records are held by the Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres in line with the GDPR policies in place.

- The Rainbows Participant Enrolment form is completed with all relevant details for each child attending a Rainbows programme and filed in line with GDPR in each Rainbows Registered Rainbows Centre.
- This includes the name, address and contact details of parents and the signed consent of both parents (waivers apply)

4.3.4 Health and safety responsibilities in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

Guidelines Requirements are documented in the Programme Centre Agreement signed by Management at the shared partnership registered programme centres to ensure

- All buildings being used are safe and meet required standards

- There is sufficient heating and ventilation
- Toilet facilities are to standard and meet the accessibility requirements of all members
- Fire precautions are in place
- First aid facilities and equipment are adequate
- There is access to a phone
- Insurance cover is adequate

4.3.5 Accidents and incidents in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- A Rainbows Programme Coordinator is present at the delivery of all Rainbows programmes.
- The Coordinator maintains and reviews all procedures for children attending the Rainbows programme.
- The Coordinator carries out a potential risk audit of the area/rooms that are used for the delivery of the Rainbows programmes
- Coordinator takes every step necessary to ensure the safety of all children attending the programme centre
- Any accident is recorded in detail and submitted to the programme centre management and the Rainbows National office
- A separate form is available to record any incident arising at a Rainbows programme centre
- Shared partnership programme centre management and Rainbows National office receive copies of any accident or incident forms when completed

4.3.6 Safe supervision of children and young people including safe adult-child ratios both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

A Rainbows programme centre Coordinator ensures that:

- All children/young people are supervised from the time of arrival at the programme centre until their departure.
- Children/young people are never not left unattended.
- Two Facilitators must be always present in every group – otherwise that group is cancelled.
- A facilitator is not permitted to facilitate a group with just one member the group is cancelled if not sufficient numbers.

4.3.7 Use of Photography, Video and/or Social/Digital Media at both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- No mobile phones are permitted in a Rainbows group.
- The taking of photographs or making a recording is not permitted
- The social media platform is controlled by Rainbows national office only and there will be no contact by Facilitators or Coordinators with service users on social media (APPENDIX 4)

4.3.8 Managing Workers and Volunteers both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

- A code of behaviour for workers, Facilitators and Coordinators provides clear guidance on acceptable and unacceptable practice in a Rainbows group

- Workers and, Facilitators and Coordinators are in a line management system with the Rainbows programme centre manager
- CPD sessions are provided regionally to ensure the supervision of Facilitators and Coordinators, and provide a process of ongoing development of knowledge and skills in relation to service delivery

4.4. Code of Behaviour for workers and volunteers in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

All Rainbows Workers, Facilitators and Coordinators are required and agree to:

Pre programme delivery:

- Be prepared in advance – will have the programme content, all materials and resources ready in advance of the group sessions commencing.
- Always dress appropriately.
- Ensure that the designated programme to suit the age and developmental stage of the group

Mobile phones:

- Mobile phones are not permitted while attending a Rainbows programme.
- Let group members know that mobile phones are not allowed in the session before you commence the group session –
- Ask group members to place their mobile phones in a box/basket/table away from the group on arrival – asking that all mobile phones be “on silent” mode.
- Facilitator’s phones (in the interest of openness/fairness) are also placed in the box/basket for duration of the group session and
- Phones are collected/returned on conclusion of group session as members depart

Programme delivery in groups:

- Strive to create a welcoming environment of warmth, total acceptance and caring.
- Listen with respect, care, compassion, empathy and acceptance.
- It is important for Facilitators to be aware of their own body language/facial expressions that may contribute to group members’ distress, anger, blame or other reactions to what is being addressed.
- Always maintain the boundaries of the programme – advice, personal opinions, solutions shall never be given.
- Treat all group members equally and with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Include all group members and give equal opportunity to speak and participate. No group member is allowed to dominate. Reassurance is given that all group members are welcome to contribute but sometimes a group member may not want to speak and that is respected.
- Show no favouritism.
- Deliver the programme as set out in the specified time frame.
- Ensure there is no physical contact between Facilitator and group members - unless it is to provide safety or help in an emergency or to provide physical assistance where needed, relevant to the age and ability.
- Use language appropriate to age and understanding of group members in the group.
- Ensure Group members are believed, feelings and emotions accepted, affirmed and validated.

- Always meet any display of strong emotions by group members with understanding in a caring nurturing environment.
- Deliver the programme as set out in the specified time frame.

Key points:

- Discuss with Coordinator when there is evidence that the group setting is not meeting the needs of any group member at that particular time in order to address the issue.
- Bring any issue/concern/worry to the attention of the Programme Coordinator
- Always maintain confidentiality, subject to the requirements in relation to Child Protection policies and procedures
- Bring to the attention of their Coordinator, any personal bereavement or significant loss during the programme. Arrangements may be made to release a Facilitator from the completion of the programme in particular circumstances to protect the Facilitator and the group members.
- Attend Formation and Debriefing meetings as an essential part of the work of Rainbows. It is important for the care of those Rainbows volunteers undertaking this type of support work. Formation and Debriefing Sessions are a fundamental part of Peer Supervision and on the job training, development and reflective practice.
- Attend mentoring/support sessions as provided by Rainbows Ireland – all attendances will be recorded at National office. Failure to meet the required level of attendance will de-register the volunteer from programme delivery until all requirements are fulfilled.
- Attend additional training or Ongoing development sessions when made available.

The Facilitator Will Not

- Facilitate if they have experienced a bereavement or separation/divorce in last 12 months
- Seek to provide any analysis or diagnosis of any group member.
- Make any assumptions or judgements about a child, their family or their situation.
- Leave a group unattended.
- Substitute one Facilitator for another.
- Sit together as Facilitators
- Leave any programme materials unattended, in an open space for a member of the public or family member to view i.e., manuals or activity sheets booklets, e.g., workplace shelves, tables or home place situation
- Do not sit beside the same group member each week – both Facilitators change where they sit each week. Facilitators DO NOT sit together in a group
- Use the Rainbows programme and its materials on a one-to-one basis.
- Give personal contact details to group members.
- Use material that is not specified in the programme – any other such material is not allowed.
- Distribute or permit the Rainbows material to be used by any third party, service, family member.
- Use inappropriate language or swearing.
- Shout, display anger, annoyance or react negatively or with impatience, scorn, ridicule or criticism.
- Make mis-leading promises or give false expectations to group members.
- Meet group members outside the group under any circumstances.
- Copy or hold any contact details of group members

- Make contact with group members outside of the group sessions during or after the programme delivery.
- Share information or details of group members with a third party
- Do not discuss Rainbows - if as a Facilitator meets a group member outside of the Rainbows sessions and centre. If at such a meeting, a group member seeks to raise an issue, the Facilitator should clearly and kindly say that should be brought up at the next Rainbows session. NO DISCUSSION SHOULD TAKE PLACE.
- Use or bring cameras, mobile phones, or any other device into group sessions
- Take notes {except re Child Protection} while in a Rainbows group.
- Post any aspect of the group members, details of programme sessions on Social media
- Allow another person to sit in with the group or observe.
- Allow any Rainbows group to be the subject of research, project work / work experience.
- Give feedback or report issues directly to parent/guardian. If a parent/staff colleague/other, ask about group members – at all times, the boundary of your role as Facilitator is maintained. No comments/information/opinions are expressed outside the boundary of the service.
- Accept gifts or benefits of any kind in relation to the role of Rainbows Facilitator before, during or after the programme, or in relation to any aspect of their role as a Rainbows volunteer.
- Plan to meet with or socialise with parents/guardians of any child attending a Rainbows programme during or post programme delivery – this can compromise the confidentiality and trust in the Rainbows process for a child/young person
- Consider their role as a Rainbows Facilitator to give advice, direct or act in any professional capacity, when circumstances arise in relation to bereavement, loss, critical incidents or tragedies.
- Act in any advisory or supportive capacity in any circumstances of bereavement, loss or parental separation/family break up other than the delivery of the Rainbows programme.
- Act in any capacity or manner outside of the boundary of the role and responsibility of a Rainbows Facilitator.
- Give or conduct any interview, presentation, blog – verbal or written - in relation to Rainbows except with prior discussion and agreement with Rainbows Ireland

4.4.1 Supervision and Support of Workers, Facilitators and Coordinators in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

The Programme Coordinator ensures that all procedures are followed as set down by Rainbows Ireland.

This includes

- Welcoming all volunteers to the Rainbows team and thanking them for their commitment.
- Ensuring Facilitators attend Formation and Debriefing sessions.
- Ensuring Facilitators attend all support and monitoring sessions arranged by Rainbows Ireland at the centre.
- Ensuring that all, Facilitators are aware that they can and should let the Coordinator know if a significant personal situation occurs and that they feel unable to continue with the programme delivery.

In shared partnership programme centres, the Centre Management Body will ensure that all volunteers are acknowledged and thanked for their commitment. Any opportunity to acknowledge the work and impact they as volunteers make through the programme delivery should be acknowledged.

4.4.2. Dealing with a concern about another worker/volunteer in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

Rainbows Ireland makes every effort to create an open and supportive environment where workers and volunteers feel comfortable and safe to pass on concerns.

Concerns about colleagues' behaviour may relate to:

- Breaches of the organizations' code of behaviour
- Conduct which may breach professional standards or codes of ethics
- Suspected or witnessed abuse.

Where a worker/Facilitator and Coordinators has a concern about a colleague they should:

- **Bring it to the attention of the DLP or a senior manager.** If the concern relates to poor practice, it should be discussed with the Centre Director. If the concern involves suspected or witnessed abusive behaviour, this should be reported without delay to the DLP (following the organisation's reporting procedure).
- **Keep a record of the concern.** The DLP or Centre Director will consider if the concern constitutes a Child Safeguarding concern, if so he/she will follow the organisation's reporting procedures for Child Safeguarding or welfare concerns. It will also be necessary to follow the organisation's procedure for responding to allegations of abuse against workers and volunteers.
- Where the concern relates **to the DLP**, reports should be made to another senior manager within the organisation.
- Where the worker/Facilitators and Coordinators feels their concerns have **not been given due regard** within the organisation or feels nervous or worried about bringing the concern to the attention of the DLP or management they should contact Tusla or An Garda Síochána directly
- If the concern does not need to be reported to Tusla (i.e., does not meet reasonable grounds for concern), it may still need to be addressed by the **DLP or line manager with the worker/**, Facilitator and Coordinator. This would be the case, for example, if the concern related to poor practice rather than abusive behaviour.

4.5 Disciplinary procedures in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

Disciplinary procedures are essential in the overall response to a failure by a worker/Facilitator/Coordinator to meet the expected standard of work or behaviour in their working practice.

Disciplinary procedures may be instituted when:

- There is a complaint made about a workers or Facilitator/Coordinator
- There is an alleged breach of the code of behaviour

- There is an allegation of abuse made against a worker or Facilitator/Coordinator

4.5.1 Appeals against disciplinary action in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centre

If the worker/ Facilitator/Coordinator feels that the disciplinary action taken against them is wrong or unjust they have the right to appeal against the decision. An appeals procedure should be developed as part of the disciplinary procedure.

The Rainbows Ireland Disciplinary Procedure can be accessed in APPENDIX 5.

Theme 5: Procedures for sharing your guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and involving parents, guardians, families and children

Introduction

Rainbows Ireland makes every effort to inform and involve parents in the ethos, boundaries and benefit of enrolling their child in a Rainbows programme.

Information is presented by programme centre Coordinators by a variety of methods

- Direct contact
- Written information/induction sheets to inform and manage their child 's participation
- Contact details of Coordinator
- Advance notice of all aspects of programme delivery
- Closing feedback sheets for parents supporting their child following the programme

5.1 Sharing guiding principles and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Parents/guardians are made aware of Rainbows Ireland's principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures on initial contact with the Rainbows service. A declaration of guiding principles about the service and criteria of peer group support is included so that expectations are managed and informed.

Parents are advised of Coordinators contact details where a face-to-face meeting may be preferred e.g., possible literacy issues, language barriers and communication differences. Parents are provided with a Rainbows Programme guide in advance of registering their children for the programme.

5.2 Empowering children and young people to claim their rights

- Parents sign on the enrolment form to say that they have discussed with their child the reason for attending the programme.
- Children must agree to attend the programme - no child can be forced to attend against their will.
- Rainbows Ireland embeds a supportive, safe and trusted environment for the delivery of all Rainbows programmes.
- A culture of total positive regard and respect is at the core of every group.
- Group participants are empowered to exercise their right to speak out when they feel they are suffering harm or are at risk of suffering harm.

5.3 Anti-bullying policy in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

“Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion.

Please see APPENDIX 6 of this document for the Rainbows Ireland Bullying Policy

5.4 Guidelines for working in partnership with parents/guardians and children /young people

5.4.1 Working in partnership with parents/guardians and families

Rainbows Ireland works in partnership with parents/guardians and families to safeguard children and young people. Forming positive relationships encourages mutual trust and reassures them that the organisation sees the welfare of the child/young person as paramount.

- Rainbows Ireland has a clear and robust procedure to include and inform parents when the programme is not meeting the needs of a child.
- Parents are contacted and signposted where possible to another service that may provide the appropriate support.

5.4.2 Communications strategy

Children:

- The first week of the programme has a key focus on Child Safeguarding – explained in age-appropriate language explaining their right to be safe from harm.
- An integral part of the programme delivery every week is a key message that if they are being harmed or if they are harming themselves or see others being harmed that we need to get help for them be safe.
- This message is highlighted and communicated with a colourful poster that is very visible on a table/wall while the programme is being delivered.
- Children have a right to be consulted on their attendance at the group programme. They also have a right to know what the reason for their attendance.
- This is documented in the Rainbows Application Form and parent’s sign that they have explained the reason/benefit for attending and have got their consent/ agreement to attend.

Parents/Guardians

- Parents have the right to decide or choose to select the service for their child/children
- Parents and Guardians are informed of the service in local communities or school communities and have the right to opt in or out.
- Parents/Guardians
 - Receive a programme guide explaining the details of the service.
 - Meet with the programme Coordinator in advance to be informed
- Parents are informed of all aspects of the Rainbows programme and the guiding principles underpinning the programme so that they can make an informed decision of the suitability of the programme for their child

- Parents are fully informed of the Child Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Parents are informed of the key person to communicate with at any time in relation to the programme.
- Parents are informed of the complaint's procedure.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the programme at any time.
- Parents at the end of the programme receive a written programme feedback conclusion.
- Parents are asked to complete an evaluation at the start and end of the programme

Worker and Volunteers

- All workers and volunteers attend a module on Child Safeguarding a policy and procedures as part of their training to deliver the Rainbows programme.
- At all Formation and Debriefing meetings – an integral part of programme delivery. Facilitators meet half an hour in advance of start time and immediately after. Child Safeguarding and Safeguarding is reviewed as part of the process.
- All CPD sessions include a review and discussion on Child Safeguarding and Safeguarding policy and procedures.

5.5 Complaints procedure in both Rainbows Ireland Registered Programme centres and Shared Partnership Rainbows Registered Programme Centres

Every effort will be made to resolve informally by meaningful engagement any issue that may arise.

Rainbows Ireland will be aware that complaints can be made by:

- Parent/guardian
- Child or young person
- An external agency or organisation involved in interagency working
- Member of the public or other who may have a legitimate concern.

A Complaints Procedure can be accessed APPENDIX 8

5.5.1 Publicising the complaints procedure.

Details of the Rainbows Ireland complaints procedure is advertised on the Rainbows website and in Volunteer Document.

Theme 6: Implementing, monitoring and reviewing your guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

6.1 Explore/review, plan, and resource.

Rainbows Ireland will annually review all practices, policies, and procedures in line with any national developments and/or any gaps identified by existing practices in Child Safeguarding policies and procedures.

Information will be gathered and robustly monitored by supervision, monitoring and feedback from parents, children attending, facilitators and coordinators within Rainbows or any feedback through peer agencies.

6.2 Implement and operate

Key steps involved in the implementation and operation of all Child Safeguarding policy and procedures will be identified by the Rainbows Ireland to include

- Dissemination to all Rainbows programme centres, workers, Facilitators and Coordinators through dedicated Child Safeguarding training module, ongoing revision, and reflection at the start of every programme delivery and inclusion at all CPD training.
- Clear guidelines to inform and explain Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to all children at the start of every session of the nine-week programme. Child Safeguarding Poster will be clearly displayed during every session of the ten -week programme
- Parents are clearly informed at every opportunity of the duty of care to all children attending the Rainbows programme and the strict adherence to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

6.3 Review and evaluate

Rainbows Ireland will monitor, further review, and evaluate the effectiveness of its child safeguarding arrangements.

- The experience of moving through steps 1 and 2 will be identified and used to inform future policy, procedure, and practice decisions.
- On-going monitoring will ensure that the practices, as outlined in the guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, will be maintained.
- Guiding principles and child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually, or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation/national policy, or where problems in the implementation process arise.

A number of performance measurement tools will be used to test and review whether children are being kept safe by:

An audit of the

- Collation and analysis of any complaints
- Collation of Child Safeguarding concerns and the actions taken.
- Collation of feedback from children/young people, parents/guardians and families.
- Analysis of practice and any breaches of procedures, codes of behaviour, etc