

Castleknock Community Centre Association



A community partnership serving
Ashleigh, Bramley, Carpenterstown Park, Laurel Lodge, Laverna, Oaktree
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Castleknock Community Center Association Ltd (CCCA) respect the rights of all children with whom it works and takes seriously any concerns in relation to their welfare and safety. Children have a right to be safe in childhood and it is the duty of each person with whom they come in contact to protect that right. A loss of human dignity, through a variety of types of abuse (neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse) will affect a child's welfare prospects, and as such, it is the duty of CCCA to act where any violation to that dignity is suspected or evident.

The object of CCCA is to promote the cultural and educational development (including the physical education and sporting activities) and to develop and promote community facilities for all residents of Laurel Lodge, Carpenterstown, Ashleigh, Oaktree, Laverna, and Bramley estates. The objective is achieved by renting rooms to cultural, sporting and community groups that provide this service and occasionally running events.

Our Child Protection Policy applies to all users of the community centre, who we define as the management committee, the Blanchardstown Amalgamated Sports Clubs (BASC) Staff that operate the center, the individuals and organisations who rent our facility for events, the volunteers who assist the management committee in running events, the people who attend events, the parents who bring their children to and from events and contractors who maintain our center or perform construction work.

In line with national guidelines on child protection – Children First, Our Duty of Care, CCCA has:

- ❑ Procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns developed within the Castleknock Community Center facilities.
- ❑ Identified a Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) to act as the liaison with the outside agencies and as a resource person to any staff member who has a child protection concerns. The DLP is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Health Service Executive (HSE) or An Garda Siochana.
- ❑ Safe and clearly defined methods of recruiting staff
- ❑ A Code of Conduct for all adult.
- ❑ A Code of Discipline for children
- ❑ A training programme for all adult volunteers and BASC staff in the areas of “Child Protection” and “Health and Safety”.
- ❑ Adequate record keeping processes including:
 - Incident /Accident Report forms
 - Training records i.e. Child Protection Sessions and Health and Safety Sessions

All adult volunteers and BASC staff should make themselves familiar with our Child Protection Policy, Basic Procedures, Code of Discipline and Code of Conduct.

Our policy on Confidentiality:

We undertake to treat as confidential any information provided to us in confidence by individuals or others, subject to our obligations under law, including the Data Protection Acts.

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CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this policy 'a worker' is anyone who is engaged in work or voluntary activity with children or young people, whether as a paid employee with a group or organisation or as a volunteer.

Where either 'children' or 'young people' are mentioned in the text, both are intended. Although these terms are defined differently in various pieces of legislation, the definition of a child under both the Child Care Act, 1991 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a person under 18. To promote best practice, it is this definition which is used.

The term 'organisation' refers to any service, agency, club, group or association that works with or provides services to children with or without remuneration and employs persons with or without professional qualification, paid or unpaid, in any capacity of work.

Protecting and promoting children's rights means

- ❑ Creating an environment, in which children are valued, encouraged and affirmed, have their rights respected and are treated as individuals.
- ❑ Taking steps to ensure that children know their rights and responsibilities.
- ❑ Accepting that the welfare of the child is the most important consideration of any organisation providing services to children.
- ❑ Eliminating as far as possible any threatening, violent or degrading behaviour.
- ❑ Adopting a child protection policy to keep children as safe as possible.

Basic Procedures to implement our Child Protection Policy

We undertake to have the following in place:

1. Procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns.
2. Safe and clearly defined methods of recruiting staff
3. A training programme for all adult volunteers and BASC staff in the areas of "Child Protection" and "Health and Safety".
4. Adequate record keeping processes including:
 - a. Incident /Accident Report forms
 - b. Training records i.e. Child Protection Sessions and Health and Safety Sessions
5. A Code of Conduct for all adult.
6. A Code of Discipline for children
7. Use of standard forms from "duty of Care" guidelines for:
 - Volunteer Application Form
 - Declaration from all Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Young People
 - Volunteer reference form
 - Incident report form.

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1.0 Procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns.

Any “Child Protection” concerns and/or complaints raised by young people, adult leaders or parents/guardians. The first line of reporting “Child Protection” concerns and/or complaints is to the BASC staff member operating the center. The BASC staff member shall log and contact the designated person at the earliest opportunity and advise them of the concern or complaint.

The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously. The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse may be summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority.
- Reports should be made without delay
- The principle of natural justice should apply, which means that a person is innocent until proven otherwise.
- The principle of confidentiality should apply, whereby only those that need to know should be told of a suspicion/allegation/disclosure of abuse and the number that need to be kept informed should be kept to a minimum.

The first line of reporting of suspected or actual child abuse is to the BASC staff member operating the center. The BASC staff member shall contact the designated person at the earliest opportunity and advise them that a suspected or actual child abuse complaint has occurred. The Designated Liaison Person is the chairperson of the community center management committee (unless formally delegated in writing).

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Health Service Executive (HSE) or An Garda Síochána.

It is the responsibility of all workers to prioritise the safety and well-being of children over all other considerations

Workers are protected under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998. The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the Health Board or An Garda Síochána. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

Steps to be taken by the Designated Liaison Person

When a designated officer in an organisation receives a report about suspected or actual child abuse, they should consider whether there are reasonable grounds for reporting it to the health board. It may be helpful to discuss the matter with a professional, such as a Social Worker, Public Health Nurse or staff in a Health Centre, who can assist them in deciding whether or not to formally report their concerns to a health board.

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The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern and should be reported:

- ❑ Specific indication from the child that (s)he was abused;
- ❑ An account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- ❑ Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- ❑ An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indicators of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
- ❑ Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. However, these suspicions should be recorded or noted internally by the organisation as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for the statutory child protection agency or An Garda Síochána.

If the designated person, on behalf of an organisation, decides that reasonable grounds for reporting the incident or suspicion to the health board or An Garda Síochána do not exist, the individual worker who referred the matter should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation is not taking action.

The worker should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the health board or An Garda Síochána themselves. The provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 apply once they report “reasonably and in good faith”.

Where reasonable grounds exist for the reporting of suspected or actual child abuse the designated person shall:

- ❑ Report to the health board in person, by telephone or in writing. Reports may be made to the Child Care Manager or directly to the social worker. Each health board has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns. (Area child care managers).
- ❑ In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of health board staff, the report should be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda Station.
- ❑ Where a designated person makes the report, it is likely that the social worker will wish to speak to the person who first witnessed the incident, received the disclosure, or experienced the concern.

HSE Area Child Care Managers

Community	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Care Area 7	Rose Cottage, Fairview, Dublin 15.	01 - 857 5431	01 - 857 5449

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Confidentiality

Any information provided to the Health Services Executive and An Garda Síochána will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving such information will only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate 'need to know'. Details will only be passed on to the relevant people within the statutory services with responsibility to take further action.

Reports which are made anonymously (where the reporter does not give his or her name) to the health board will be followed up. However, it must be remembered that not giving a name may make it more difficult for professionals to investigate and assess a situation.

People sometimes find it useful to clarify their thoughts before making a formal report. One of the ways this can be done is by talking to a supervisor, or calling to the health board or An Garda Síochána. However, caution should be used when doing so. It is important to make clear that the purpose of the call is to seek advice rather than make a formal report. This may mean not revealing identifying details regarding the family or child at that stage. If the person receiving the information feels that there is good reason to be concerned that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, they will ask for identifying detail in the interests of the child. Difficult though these situations are, actions must be guided by the guiding principle that a child's protection and welfare must come first.

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2.0 Safe and clearly defined methods of recruiting staff

Blanchardstown Amalgamated Sports Clubs (BASC) Staff that operate the center implement FAS procedures for the selection of participants to run the center. The implementation of these procedures is the responsibility of the BASC supervisor.

The individuals and organisations who rent our facility for events are responsible for the selection of adult supervisors or volunteers in line with national guidelines on child protection – Children First, Our Duty of Care.

CCCA is responsible for the recruitment & overseeing adult volunteers in line with its volunteer policy. Two standards apply:

1. Volunteers and management committee members involved in running events for adults or family events where the children remain under the supervision of their parents.
2. Volunteers and management committee members involved in running events for children and young people. **Additional procedures** apply to the selection and training for these events.

Additional procedures for recruitment & overseeing adult leaders working with children:

(i) Clear definition of the role of the volunteer: The scope shall clarify and document expectations regarding the role of a new worker, and involves identifying the minimum level of personal qualities and skills required to fill the post.

(ii) Application Form: An application form, with a clear job description and information about the organisation and event. The form is to collect all relevant information about the applicant, including past experience of working with children. (See Application Form in Appendix 2)

(iii) Declaration: All applicants shall be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with young people, and declaring any past criminal convictions or cases pending against them. The volunteer policy documents the type of factors that would exclude applicants. (Sample Declaration in Appendix 3)

(iv) Interview: All applicants shall be interviewed by a panel comprising of at least two representatives of CCCA. Interviewers should explore the information stated on the application form and assess the applicant's suitability for the post. The information supplied by the applicant and any other information supplied on their behalf should only be seen by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.

(v) References: An applicant should 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 worker/volunteer, or any other issues which may affect their ability to perform the tasks required of them. At least one referee should have first hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. 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 received in writing and later confirmed by telephone, letter or personal visit. Any additional information should be attached to the application form.

(vi) Identification: CCCA will ensure that the identity of the applicant is confirmed against some documentation (ID card, driving license or passport) which gives his or her full name, address together with a signature or photograph. This should be compared with the written application.

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3.0 “Child Protection” training programme for all adult volunteers and BASC staff

Separate training needs are identified for:

- BASC staff
- Designated Liaison Person
- CCCA management committee and adult volunteers.
- The individuals and organisations who rent our facility for events

3.1 The training of the BASC staff is the responsibility of the BASC supervisor who develops an individual training plan for all BASC staff (FAS learners).

3.2 The training of the Designated Liaison Person is the responsibility of CCCA. This is specialist training that will be outsourced. All costs associated with the training are the responsibility of CCCA.

3.3 The training of CCCA management committee and adult volunteers. The nature of training will depend on the events and range of services provided by the organisations, and the needs of staff and volunteers.

- Induction training
- Particular skills training,
- Child protection training, to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse

3.3.1 Induction training

When a new member is elected to the committee, the induction will enable the volunteer to get to know the organisation, their colleagues, their job and other organisations doing the same type of work. It should also cover expectations, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances and allegations, and the child protection policy. An existing member of the committee will be appointed as a mentor, and a copy of the policies and procedures will be given to new committee member.

Where a volunteer is accepted for a specific event, the induction will be customized for the specific tasks but shall include as a minimum the Health and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Policy.

3.3.2 Particular skills training. Where a volunteer is elected to a position of responsibility (officer) and they do not possess the necessary skills, CCCA will identify and fund the necessary training.

Where a volunteer is accepted for a specific event, the particular skills necessary shall be assessed by the event organizer, and a training plan documented. Examples are where volunteers provide assistance to the café – instruction on the safe use of equipment will be provided either prior to the event or “on the job”.

3.3.3 Child protection training will be provided by the CCCA Designated Liaison Person to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse.

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- 3.4 The training of the individuals and organisations who rent our facility for events is the responsibility of these organisations. Where requested, CCCA will try to facilitate training either on site or identify providers who can provide this training off site. All costs associated with the training are the responsibility of the individuals and organisations who rent our facility for events.

4.0 Record keeping.

Child protection records shall be maintained by the designated liaison person and treated as confidential, subject to our obligations under law, including the Data Protection Acts. .

The records shall include the following:

- ❑ Volunteer Application Forms for Children's events.
- ❑ Volunteer reference forms
- ❑ Declaration from all staff and volunteers working with children and young people.
- ❑ Details of selection and induction, along with notes on any matters arising during any part of the process.
- ❑ Training records.
- ❑ Report of allegations or suspicions of abuse, including all notes documenting steps taken and the resolution of allegations or suspicions.
- ❑ Incident /Accident Report forms involving children or young people.
- ❑ Reports of incidents where children or young people were asked to leave center as a result of unacceptable behaviour.
- ❑ Reports of incidents where An Garda Síochána called as a result of unacceptable behaviour of children or young people.

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5.0 Code of Conduct for all adults.

Do

- ❑ Workers should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities
- ❑ Workers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they even tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- ❑ Everyone should respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
- ❑ Treat young people with courtesy, respect and dignity
- ❑ Care will be taken to ensure that when working with mixed gender groups staff and adult volunteers of appropriate gender should work in pairs
- ❑ Always maintain the practice of ensuring that no young person is left alone with an adult.
- ❑ Engage with young people in an open manner and care will be taken not to show favouritism or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one child..
- ❑ Bring any concerns and/or complaints to the immediate attention of the BASC staff on duty.
- ❑ Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to either a designated person, or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of CCCA designated liaison person.
- ❑ The designated liaison person will respond promptly to all concerns and liase with the Health Service Executive (HSE) or An Garda Siochana.
- ❑ All concerns and/or complaints will be forwarded to the relevant authorities in a timely and efficient manner.

Don't

- ❑ Young people will not be permitted to consume alcohol or smoke while participating in activities in keeping with civil law in Ireland.
- ❑ Leaders will not consume alcohol or smoke while having responsibility for or in the presence of young people.
- ❑ Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted by young people or leaders.
- ❑ Physical contact between young people and leaders should only occur where appropriate. Leaders should not engage in rough play or undertake any task of a personal nature with/for young people except in cases of medical necessity when the welfare of the child depends on it.
- ❑ It is not recommended that volunteers give lifts in their cars to individual young people.

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6.0 Code of Discipline for children

Aims of the Code

- ❑ To create an environment where all (i.e. children, BASC staff, volunteers and parents) feel safe, respected and valued.
- ❑ To establish effective means of communication between children, volunteers, parents/guardians and BASC staff.
- ❑ To help children to acquire a respect for the belief and values of others.

In managing disruptive behaviour the following guidelines are important.

- ❑ Be aware of your own responses and reactions.
- ❑ Remain calm and composed.
- ❑ Intervene immediately; do not allow things to escalate.
- ❑ Identify the specific nature of the problem.
- ❑ Identify if possible what gave rise to the problem.
- ❑ Try to deal with the situation sensitively for all concerned.
- ❑ Work with what is positive.
- ❑ Don't be Confrontational.
- ❑ Involve the group if appropriate in the solution.
- ❑ Invoke agreed ground rules
- ❑ Affirm progress.
- ❑ Seek help if necessary.
- ❑ Where appropriate, record the incident

Sanctions / Strategies for Dealing with Mis-Behaviour

1. Verbal reprimand to include reasoning and advising how to improve.
2. Temporary separation, within the group, from other children or stands apart from group until calm and ready to resume work.
3. Child asked to leave the premises, informed that behaviour is not acceptable. Where child is under 12 years of age, parents contacted and requested to remove child immediately.
4. Child informed that behaviour is unacceptable and asked to leave center and informed that they are bared from center. Report filled out and BASC supervisor and management committee informed within 24 hours. CCTV used to illustrate problem.
5. An Garda Síochána called, formal complaint made of incident. CCTV used to illustrate problem.

This strategy to be used at the discretion of the worker depending on the situation and the age of the child. The age of the child will influence how quickly the incident escalates through the stages.

The parents are informed depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour.

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Appendix 1 (from "Duty of Care" guidelines).

Volunteer Application Form (Children's events)

Forename _____ **Surname** _____

Address:

Date of Birth: _____ **Tel. No.** _____

Are you: (Please tick)

Employed **Unemployed** **Student** **Homemaker** **Retired** **Other**

Previous work experience:

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work? Yes **No**

If yes, give details:

How much time can you commit to voluntary work? (Please tick)

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Please provide names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not relatives).

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Do you have any spare time hobbies, interests or activities?

Any other relevant information?

Please provide names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not relatives).

Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Tel: _____	Tel: _____
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Signed: _____	Date: _____
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Appendix 2 (from "Duty of Care" guidelines).

DECLARATION FROM ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Forename _____ **Surname** _____
Date of Birth: _____ **Place of Birth:** _____

Any other name previously known as

1. Have you ever been convicted of an criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order? Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix 3 (from "Duty of Care" guidelines).

Volunteer reference form

_____ has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with this club/organisation and has given your name as a referee.

This post involves substantial access to children and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people?

Yes No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential, and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor, should they be offered a volunteer position. We would appreciate you being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? _____

In what capacity? _____

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes them a suitable volunteer?

How would you describe their personality? _____

Please rate this person on the following (please tick)

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self-motivation					
Motivation of Others					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Occupation: _____

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Appendix 4 (from "Duty of Care" guidelines).

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

In case of Emergency or outside Health Board hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána.

To Principal Social Worker/Designate,
Community Care Area 7, Rose Cottage, Fairview, Dublin 15

1. Details of Child:

Name: _____ Male: Female:

Address: _____

Age/D.O.B.: _____ School: _____

1a. Name of Mother: _____ Name of Father: _____

Address of Mother if different to Child: _____ Address of Father if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Telephone Number: _____

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known: _____

1c. Household Composition:

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known).

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3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Male: Female:

Address:

Relationship to Child:

Occupation: _____

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: _____

School: _____

Public Health Nurse: _____

Gardaí: _____

G.P.: _____

Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club Club

Hospital: _____

Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs:

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes No

If Yes, what is their attitude?

6. Details of Person reporting concerns:

(Please see Guidance Notes re. Limitations of confidentiality)

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address:

Telephone Number: _____

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Occupation: _____ Signed: _____

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Guidance Notes:

Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her. (01 - 857 5431).