



Child Safeguarding Policy

September 2018

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Child Safeguarding – Context and Purpose.....	5
Scope.....	5
ERD Commitment to Child Safeguarding	6
Child Safeguarding Minimum Standards	7
Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments	7
Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations .	7
Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant.....	7
Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent.....	7
Standard 5: Training & Support for Keeping Children Safe	7
Standard 6: Communication the Safeguarding Message.....	7
Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards	7
Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments.....	7
Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations	7
Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant	8
Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent.....	9
Standard 5: Training & Support for Keeping Children Safe	10
Standard 6: Communication the Safeguarding Message.....	10
Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards	10
Appendices.....	12

Introduction

Edmund Rice Development (ERD) is an international development agency that supports the Edmund Rice Mission to promote human rights and fullness of life for all, especially those made poor.

Edmund Rice Mission was founded by the Christian Brothers, a Catholic Religious Congregation founded in 1802 in Ireland by Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice. The Edmund Rice Mission is committed to working with those made poor to tackle the root causes of poverty. The wider Edmund Rice Network includes people, organisations and communities worldwide who support the work of the Edmund Rice Mission.

The Congregation has five Provinces (Africa, Europe, India, North America and Oceania) and one Region, Latin America.



Independent and autonomous governing bodies own and govern Edmund Rice Mission projects and resources in specific areas of the Congregation. These 'mission partner governing bodies' are responsible for multiple projects and are each the ultimate authorities to which ERD relates. They collaborate to achieve the development and sustainability goals established in the Edmund Rice Mission Strategic Development Framework.

ERD works in partnership with the following mission partner governing bodies:

East Africa District	Latin America Region
South Central Africa District	Oceania Province
West Africa District	Edmund Rice International
Africa Province	Transition Support Team via the Congregation Leadership Team
India Province	

Edmund Rice Development and these mission partner governing bodies collaborate to achieve our mutual goal of facilitating transformation in the lives of people made poor. ERD recognises the independence and autonomy of these governing bodies. They in turn respect the authority and responsibility of ERD to set forth policy and standards in relation to the funding it provides.

Child Safeguarding – Context and Purpose

Edmund Rice Development (ERD) is committed to ensuring that the projects we support and fund are respectful of, and accountable to, all project participants. Our values of compassionate presence, engagement, empowerment and mutual transformation underpin this commitment.

ERD recognises that children are particularly vulnerable and must therefore be actively protected. This policy sets out our approach to child safeguarding in this regard. The goal of ERD's Child Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the protection of and safeguard children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any form of abuse in the process of ERD's work.

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that:

- **Children who come into contact with ERD are protected from any form of abuse.**
- **ERD's mission partners are committed to protection of children and that their policies and behaviour reflect this commitment.**
- **ERD's staff and board of directors are fully cognisant of child protection and safeguarding issues, particularly in relation to the work of ERD.**

ERD's Child Safeguarding Policy has been developed as an important part of our ongoing governance and risk management and is based on a review of relevant international and national protection policies and related documents including:

- Mísean Cara Safeguarding Policy
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child First Act (2015), Ireland
- Child First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland
- Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2016), National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church

In addition, the protection policies of several donors, international and national non-government organisations have been reviewed and incorporated.

The ERD Child Safeguarding Policy regards any person under the age of 18 years as a child.

In Ireland (North and South), a child or young person is defined as being anyone under the age of 18 years 'excluding a person who is or has been married' (*Children First: National Guidance, 2011, p.8*).

Scope

- ERD's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures apply to all ERD Personnel including staff, volunteers, consultants and board of directors.
- In the normal course of its work, ERD does not work directly with children. However, ERD personnel do come into contact with children throughout the course of their work, and therefore, ERD sets forth the following policy and procedures to ensure those children are safeguarded.
- ERD requires the partners and projects that we fund to have in place and actively implement a safeguarding policy consistent with the law of the country in which they work and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church Ireland (NBSCCCI).

- When visiting projects/ schools/ organisations and mission partners, ERD is bound by the local jurisdictional requirements of our partners in the places they work.
- Throughout the process of ensuring the safety and welfare of children, ERD and its Mission Partners will act in a way that is sensitive to varying family dynamics and lifestyles, different racial, ethnic and cultural groups and issues of age, disability, gender, religion, language and sexual orientation.

ERD Commitment to Child Safeguarding

The ERD board of directors is fully committed to the safeguarding of children. It recognises that considerations on safeguarding of children permeate all aspects of ERD's work and are reflected in relevant policies, practices and activities.

The ERD board of directors, in partnership with mission partner governing bodies, is ultimately accountable for ensuring that children are safeguarded across the span of ERD's work and for implementation of the ERD Child Safeguarding Policy throughout the organisation.

The ERD board of directors carries out a review of the Child Safeguarding Policy every three years. All mission partner governing bodies, as well as individual projects, funded by ERD must have in place a site-specific child safeguarding policy.

All board directors, employees, volunteers and contractors must agree to fully comply with ERD's safeguarding policy.

ERD supports mission partner governing bodies and their projects who have a child safeguarding policy in place:

- at application stage
- at contract stage before funding is approved,
- during ERD monitoring visits,
- at reporting stage.

To note: a child safeguarding policy does not need to be in place for a new project which is at concept stage (when activities have not yet begun). At application stage however, ERD will only consider a project funding application only when the policy is in place.

Child Safeguarding Minimum Standards

The following are the acknowledged minimum standards for child safeguarding.

The ERD board of directors has agreed and is committed to the implementation of Safeguarding Minimum Standards outlined below.

- Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
- Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations
- Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant
- Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent
- Standard 5: Training & Support for Keeping Children Safe
- Standard 6: Communication the Safeguarding Message
- Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

- ERD and mission partners follow effective practice guidelines and legislative requirements in the recruitment of all personnel and in assessing their suitability to work with children including self-declaration forms, statutory vetting (where possible) and references.
- ERD and mission partners implement effective practice on the expected standards of adults' behaviour toward children and in encouraging children's positive behaviour through ERD's Code of Conduct (**See Appendix 1**).
- ERD and mission partners implement effective practice in safe care for all children, including those with specific needs if the need arises.
- ERD and mission partners have in place clearly written whistle-blowing procedures to support and assist personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children involved in our activities.
- ERD and mission partners have clearly written complaints procedures regarding safeguarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse.
- ERD and mission partners implement effective practice for personnel on assessment of hazards when working with children.
- ERD and mission partners implement effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology, including social media by personnel.
- ERD communications comply with the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (**See Appendix 2**) and all personnel, board of directors, mission partners and contractors are made aware of this code.
- ERD and mission partners believe that the most effective means of ensuring appropriate protection of children is their involvement in project planning, implementation and monitoring. To this end, ERD promotes and supports the inclusion of children's voices in all relevant projects (ie those where children are involved) funded through ERD.

Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations

ERD supports mission partners and projects which have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. In doing so, all national and international legal and practice requirements will be met and guidance adhered to. Note, safety of the child will always be the priority and if urgent action is required to protect the child then this will be given priority.

- ERD and mission partners recognise that abuse of the child may take many different forms (**See Appendix 4** for definitions and indicators of abuse).
- ERD and mission partners have procedures in place on how to respond to an adult or child who discloses abuse (**See Appendix 5**).
- ERD and mission partners have clearly written reporting procedures in place should suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations about the abuse of a child arise (**See Appendix 5**).
- ERD and mission partners will record all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and action(s) taken that complies with relevant data protection legislation, statutory guidance on confidentiality and storage of information.
- ERD and mission partners will share information about child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with those who need to know in order to keep children safe. All allegations, suspicions concerns or knowledge regarding child abuse that meet the threshold for reporting must be passed to the relevant statutory authorities. Disclosure to include names, addresses, details of the allegations, and if the respondent has made an admission, where this information is available.
- ERD mission partners will share information about child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with ERD as soon as possible after the apparent incident. ERD in turn will share such information with funders and the leadership team of the Christian Brothers in the spirit of transparency, and to ensure accountability to the communities we serve.
- Mission partners will appoint a Designated Liaison Officer (DLO) or Designated Protection person, at project, district (where applicable) and governing body level.
- ERD will appoint a DLO at head office who will be fully trained in Child Safeguarding and will act as the implementing officer of the Child Safeguarding Policy for the organisation. An outline of the DLO's role and responsibilities is in **Appendix 3**
As such, they will:
 - Act as a focal point to receive, record and assess relevant information in relation to child safeguarding.
 - Liaise on ERD's behalf with relevant statutory authorities.
 - Ensure the compliance of the policy and monitoring of safeguarding across the organisation.
 - Ensure that ERD's safeguarding policies and procedures are in line with recommended best practice.
 - Ensure staff, directors, contractors and volunteers sign the ERD Child Safeguarding Policy and are adequately trained in Child Safeguarding.

Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant

Complainants who have suffered abuse receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support and advice.

- ERD and mission partners will work in cooperation with relevant organisations and seek specialist advice from the statutory protection services when necessary.

Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent

Personnel who have concerns about child abuse or who have received a disclosure of child abuse (the 'Respondent') must bring this to the attention of the ERD Designated Liaison Officer (DLO) immediately.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending the intervention of the statutory authorities. In the event of an emergency where a child is in immediate danger and statutory authorities cannot be reached, emergency services must be contacted.

Where the ERD DLO has received a direct report of a child protection or welfare concern, or considers that indicators are present for a child protection or welfare concern meets outlined in **Appendix 4, Table 4.1**, then the ERD DLO will report this to:

- ERD CEO who will report it immediately to the ERD board of directors.
- the DLO/ Designated Protection person of the relevant mission partner governing body (if the child is in a project supported by ERD) and the leader of the governing body of the relevant project. They will then follow the reporting procedure of that Project's Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy.
- the DLO/ Designated Protection person of the relevant school/ organisation (if the child is in Ireland) and the leadership of the school/ organisation. They will then follow the reporting procedure of that school/ organisation's Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy.

The details of the disclosure/ concern/ knowledge of the incident should be accurately recorded, this record should be signed and dated by the respondent and the ERD DLO. If available this should be on the reporting form as per the Project/ School/ Organisation Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy.

Where the ERD DLO remains uncertain, he/she will contact the relevant statutory authority (in Ireland: TUSLA Child and Family Agency) for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.

As part of the reporting procedure of the school/ organisation's Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy, the relevant DLO/ Designated Protection person will ensure that the parents/carers are informed - this will be following consultation and advice from the statutory authorities - and that the report has been made, unless to do so would be likely to endanger the child. In those cases, where the DLO/ Designated Protection person decides not to report concerns to statutory authorities, the personnel who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the DLO/ Designated Protection person is not taking such action. The personnel will be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to statutory authorities.

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, both the ERD DLO and the relevant project/ school/ organisation's DLO/ Designated Protection person must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in a situation that could place them in immediate danger.

Standard 5: Training & Support for Keeping Children Safe

ERD and mission partner personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order, to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect all.

- ERD and mission partners ensure that the induction of personnel will include training on the safeguarding policy & procedures.
- ERD and mission partners will conduct annual assessments that identify all personnel that require training and develop a training plan based on this.
- ERD and mission partners will ensure that personnel who have specific safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate role specific training.
- ERD and mission partners will facilitate the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved in relation to their responsibility to safeguard.

Standard 6: Communication the Safeguarding Message

ERD and mission partners are committed to ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about our safeguarding policy accordingly and understand the importance of safeguarding children.

- ERD's Child Safeguarding Policy is
 - Displayed on ERD's website and a signed hard copy stored in our head office.
 - Shared and discussed with all current and future ERD employees, volunteers and consultants.
 - Shared and discussed with all ERD existing and potential mission partners.
- ERD and mission partners will ensure to disseminate the policy and communicate the wider safeguarding message to people whose first language is not English, as well as to people who have specific needs.
- ERD and its mission partners will establish links with other local/national organisations in order to promote a safe and caring community and to share best safeguarding practices.

Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

ERD holds itself accountable to comply with this Child Safeguarding Policy and uphold the standards agreed and committed to by the ERD board of directors. In order to monitor compliance with the standards, ERD monitors our child safeguarding practices as well as the practices of mission partners throughout the project life cycle. Please refer to ERD's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy for more details.

- ERD will review and follow up on any significant child safeguarding issues amongst partners or ERD staff as they arise.
- ERD will draft and share an annual Child Safeguarding report with the ERD board of directors, or more frequently if indicated.
- ERD will complete annually the ERD Child Safeguarding Self-Assessment (**Appendix 6**) to identify any child safeguarding capacity gaps at organisational level and develop a subsequent Action Plan that outlines the actions to be taken to address any gaps, identify who is responsible for implementing these actions, and propose a timeframe to complete actions with resources required to do so.

- Regular project monitoring reports submitted to ERD must include progress against the annual Action Plan.
- Project reports must include a Child Safeguarding Report to ensure that safeguarding incidents are captured, documented and handled appropriately.
- During annual monitoring visits to projects, ERD staff to complete the Monitoring Visit report form, which includes ensuring a Child Safeguarding policy is in place and is followed.
- At the completion of a monitoring visit, ERD will incorporate their findings on child safeguarding within the Monitoring Report and share feedback, recommendations and follow-up actions with partners and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – ERD Code of Conduct

As a member of ERD staff/ board of directors or as a contractor/ volunteer I agree to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Treat all children equally.
- Model positive & appropriate behaviour to all children with whom I come into contact.
- Be fully aware of the details of the ERD Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Challenge & report suspected or potentially abusive behaviour immediately to the ERD Designated Liaison Officer.
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty & safety.
- Develop a culture where children have permission to tell and talk about any concerns or worries that they may have.
- Respect each child's boundaries and support them to develop their own sense of rights.

I will never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Condone or participate in, behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in any way that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Discriminate against, show different treatment or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Develop sexual relationships with children.
- Engage with a child on any ERD social media channels or electronic mail.
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Take children away/to my own home, especially where they will be alone with me.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 – Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

A. Guiding Principles

Choices of images and messages will be made based on the paramount principles of:

- Respect for the dignity of the people concerned;
- Belief in the equality of all people;
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice.

Accordingly, in all our communications and where practical and reasonable within the need to reflect reality, we strive to:

- Choose images and related messages based on values of respect equality, solidarity and justice;
- Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;
- Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places;
- Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission of the subjects (or subjects' parents/guardian);
- Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves;
- Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identifiable and always act accordingly
- Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and protection of the vulnerable people.

B. Declaration of Commitment

As signatories to this Code, we confirm that our commitment to best practice in communications affects the entirety of our organisation.

By signing the Code, we commit to putting in place meaningful mechanisms to ensure that the Code's principles are implemented throughout all activities of our organisation.

Our responsibilities as a signatory to this Code lead us to be accountable in our public communications as follows:

1. We will make the existence of the Code known to the public and all our partners and will provide a feedback mechanism whereby anyone can comment on the fulfilment of the Code and where any member of the public will have a 'right to challenge' our application of the Code.
2. We will communicate our commitment to best practice in the communication of images and messages in all our public policy statements by placing the following statement on our relevant public communications (annual reports, website, policy statements, governance documents, leaflets and communication materials etc.):
Edmund Rice Development has signed the code of conduct on images and messages (www.edmundricedevlopment.org/code). Please send your feedback to office@edmundricedevlopment.org.
3. We commit to assess our public communications on an annual basis according to the guiding principles.

4. We will include reference to adherence to the Code in the guiding principles of our organisation and ensure that the top management take the responsibility of implementing and adhering to the code.
5. We will ensure that all relevant suppliers, contractors and media will adhere to the Code when working with our organisation.
6. We commit to training our staff on the use of images and messages.
7. We agree to share our experience of implementing the Code with other signatory organisations and will report annually to Dóchas on this experience.

Appendix 3 – ERD Designated Liaison Officer (DLO)

ERD Designated Liaison Officer (DLO):

Michael Hanly

Tel: +353 1 819 6782

Mobile: +353 (0) 87 933 7104

Email: Michael@edmundricedevlopment.org

Role and Responsibilities of the DLO:

Role:

- To ensure that the wellbeing and safety of children is promoted and supported in ERD.
- To ensure that ERD has in place clear and effective policies, procedures and systems to maintain and uphold the highest standards with regard to child safeguarding.
- To provide advice, support, direction and act as a resource to ERD and projects funded by ERD and our donors on all aspects regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection.

The ERD DLO is responsible for managing any suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegation made in ERD from start to finish including:

- To receive information where it is alleged or suspected that a child (or children) has/ have been, or are being abused.
- The referral to the project DLO/ Protection Officer and leader of the mission partner governing body. Or if the child/ children are in Ireland, to the appropriate school/ organisation's DLO/ Protection Officer and leadership.
- Requesting follow-up reports detailing child safeguarding outcomes.

Responsibilities:

- Receive information about a concern or allegation either directly from a child or from any other individual
- Create a Case File for that concern or allegation
- Explain ERD procedures to the complainant
- Inform the ERD CEO (whi in turn informs and appraises the ERD board of directors)
- Make a referral to the relevant school/ project/ organisation's DLO/ Protection Officer and leadership
- Contact the emergency services/ relevant local authority if a child is deemed to be at immediate risk. When unsure, they may refer to the Irish child and social services agency TUSLA or to an Garda Siochana/ relevant authorities
- Where an allegation is made concerning an overseas project, ensure that the safeguarding procedures of that project were adhered to and follow up with the school/ project/ organisation's DLO/ Protection Officer and leadership re status of the incident report.
- Request in writing confirmation from the relevant school/ project/ organisation's DLO/ Protection Officer and leadership, and request to be kept informed of their progress.

4- Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.

The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and the child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver.

Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

Emotional abuse also includes the non-physical bullying of a child by another child or adult either verbally in person or through social media or electronic means.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur on a single occasion or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping. Hitting or lucking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs even over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms. It must be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

ERD considers the age of consent to be that which is statutory to the local jurisdiction where the child/ children reside.

Please Note: All signs/ indicators need careful assessment by professionals relative to the child's circumstances.

For further details regarding definitions/ indicators of the above categories of abuse please refer to Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2011 (Department of Children & Youth Affairs)

Table 4.1 Indicators of Abuse (Source: *Misean Cara Safeguarding Policy Jan 2017*)

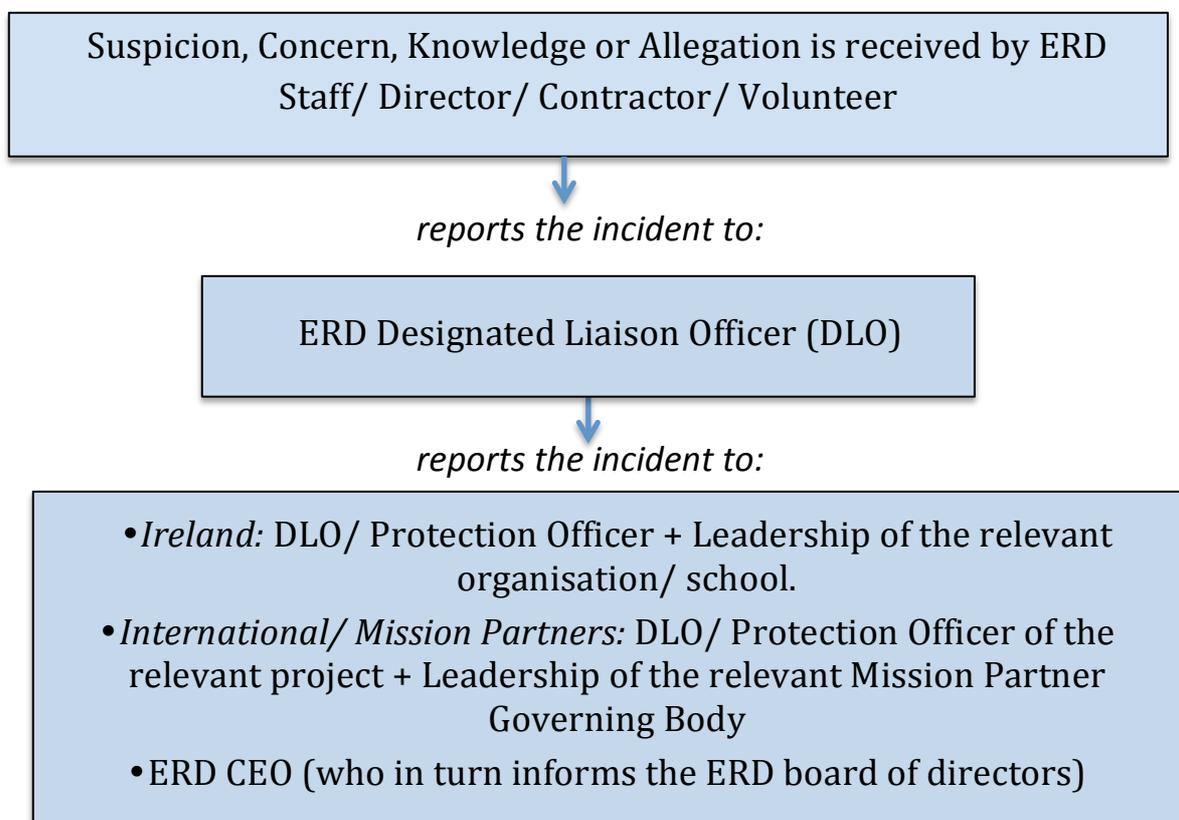
NEGLECT	EMOTIONAL
<p>Child neglect should be suspected in cases of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abandonment or desertion; • children persistently being left alone without adequate care and supervision; • malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding; • lack of warmth; • lack of adequate clothing; • inattention to basic hygiene; • lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age; • persistent failure to attend school; • non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also to emotional deprivation; and • failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of comfort and love and rejection; • lack of attachment; • lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play); • lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned); • continuous lack of praise and encouragement; • serious over-protectiveness; • inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking in bedrooms); • family conflicts and/or violence; inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development; and • children who are physically and sexually abused and neglected also suffer from emotional abuse. • Social media/ electronic bullying or victimisation

Contd..

<u>PHYSICAL</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u>
<p>Unsatisfactory explanations, varying explanations, frequency and clustering for the following events are high indices for concern regarding physical abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bruises and fractures; • swollen joints; • burns/scalds • abrasions/lacerations; • haemorrhages (retinal, subdural); • damage to body organs; • poisonings – repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol); • failure to thrive; • coma/unconsciousness; and • death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bleeding from the vagina/anus; • difficulty/pain in passing urine/faeces; • an infection may occur secondary to sexual abuse, which may or may not be a definitive sexually transmitted disease; • professionals should be informed if a child has a persistent vaginal discharge or has warts/rash in genital area; noticeable and uncharacteristic change of behaviour; • hints about sexual activity; • age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour; • inappropriate seductive behaviour; • sexually aggressive behaviour with others; • uncharacteristic sexual play with peers/toys; and • unusual reluctance to join in normal activities that involve undressing, e.g. games/swimming

Appendix 5 – Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

Flow Chart for Reporting Procedures Children / Young People



When ERD staff, directors, contractors or volunteers are working with, or visiting a project/ school/ organisation overseas or in Ireland they could be alerted to signs that may suggest a child or young person is in need of help.

ERD personnel who have concerns about child abuse or who have received a disclosure of child abuse must bring this to the attention of the ERD Designated Liaison Officer (DLO) immediately.

Particular care will be taken in regard to confidentiality and the sharing of information with appropriate people.

Guidelines for ERD Personnel *(staff/ directors/ contractors/ volunteers):*

When a child safeguarding concern is brought to your attention

– ACT:

Act on your concerns, if in doubt always speak out.

Child-centred. The protection of children is the most important consideration.

Time counts. Ensure timely, confidential and appropriate responses to child safeguarding issues.

Responding to a child/young person who disclose abuse

Remember, 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 has been done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement 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 to you;
- 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;
- Avoid asking about intimate details or suggestion 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

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you;
- You will be sharing the 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. By refusing 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 then tell a lie and ruin the child/young person's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely the child/young person will return to you 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 Designated Liaison Officer immediately and agree measures to protect the child/young person, e.g. report the matter directly to statutory authority.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Responding to adults who disclose childhood abuse

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Often such disclosures come to light when people attend counselling. They also sometimes arise in adult services and services which work with parents/guardians and families.

Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be a current risk to any child or young person who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure. This is important even where children/young people about whom there may be a concern are still to be identified.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child/young person who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, you need to follow the reporting procedures, the DLO must report it to the statutory authority without delay.

Appendix 6 – ERD Child Safeguarding Self-Assessment¹

This form to be used by ERD for the organisation's own use. Mission partners and projects to follow their project-specific policy.

The questions below are designed to draw out the minimum standards that all agencies committed to safeguarding children should be striving to meet. However, depending on the nature of the organisation's work with children and the context, environment and working conditions, some questions are more relevant than others. This self-audit tool will be a useful guide and you may wish to delete or add criteria to ensure relevance to the particular project.

The self-audit tool asks you to think about six different areas:

1. Children and the organisation
2. Policies and procedures
3. Preventing harm to children
4. Implementation and training
5. Information and communication
6. Monitoring and review

There are six standards within each area. Read each statement and tick the box as appropriate:

A: In place

B: Partially done

C: Not in place

Children and the organisation		A	B	C
1	The organisation is very clear about its responsibility to protect children and makes this known to all who come into contact with it.			
2	The way staff and other representatives behave towards children suggests that they are committed to protecting children from abuse.			
3	There is good awareness of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child or other children's rights instruments and this is seen as a basis for child protection in the organisation.			
4	Managers and senior staff ensure that children are listened to and consulted and that their rights are met.			
5	The organisation makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection.			
6	The organisation manages children's behaviour in ways which are non-violent and do not degrade or humiliate children.			
Policies and procedures that help keep children safe		A	B	C
1	The organisation has a written child safeguarding/protection policy or has some clear arrangements to make sure that children are kept safe from harm.			
2	The policy or arrangements are approved and endorsed by the relevant management body.			
3	The policy or arrangements have to be followed by everyone.			
4	There are clear child protection procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a			

¹ Adapted from Keeping Children Safe, with permission.

	child's safety or welfare.			
5	There is a named child safeguarding/protection person/s with clearly defined role and responsibilities.			
6	The child protection procedures also take account of local circumstances.			
Preventing harm to children		A	B	C
1	There are policies and procedures or agreed ways of recruiting representatives and for assessing their suitability to work with children, including where possible police and reference checks.			
2	There are some written guidelines for behaviour or some way of describing to staff and other representatives what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable especially when it comes to contact with children.			
3	The consequences of breaking the guidelines on behaviour are clear and linked to organisational disciplinary procedures.			
4	Guidance exists on appropriate use of information technology such as the internet, websites, digital cameras etc. to ensure that children are not put at risk.			
5	Where there is direct responsibility for running/providing activities, including residential care, children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.			
6	There are well-publicised ways in which staff/ representatives can raise concerns, confidentially if necessary, about unacceptable behaviour by other staff or representatives.			
Implementation and training		A	B	C
1	There is clear guidance to staff, partners and other organisations (including funding organisations) on how children will be kept safe.			
2	Child safeguarding is applied in ways that are culturally sensitive but without condoning acts that are harmful to children.			
3	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe.			
4	All members of staff and volunteers have training on child safeguarding/protection when they join the organisation which includes an introduction to the organisation's child protection policy and procedures where these exist.			
5	All members of staff and other representatives are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.			
6	Work has been undertaken with all partners to agree good practice expectations based on these standards.			
Information and communication		A	B	C
1	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.			
2	Everyone in the organisation knows which named staff member has special responsibilities for keeping children safe and how to contact them.			
3	Contact details are readily available for local child safeguarding resources, safe places, national authorities and emergency medical help.			
4	Children are provided with information on where to go to for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying.			
5	Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies as appropriate.			

6	Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information.			
	Monitoring and review	A	B	C
1	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child safeguarding measures put in place by the organisation.			
2	Steps are taken to regularly ask children and parents/carers their views on policies and practices aimed at keeping children safe the effectiveness of these.			
3	The organisation uses the experience of operating safeguarding to influence policy and practice development.			
4	All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.			
5	Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals, ideally at least every three years.			
6	Children and parents/carers are consulted as part of a review of safeguarding policies and practices.			

The Self-Audit Web

When you have finished the self-audit tool, transfer your answers to the web using different coloured pens. The self-audit web lets you make a diagram of your organisation, showing how well your organisation is doing in making children safe, and where you need to take further action. Use a different colour, or different kind of shading for A, B and C.

Once the key criteria above have been read and ticked as either: a) in place, b) partially done or c) not in place, transfer the results to the web. The web illustrates visually the stage reached by the organisation in safeguarding children and highlights where further action needs to be taken. Please note that there is no intended hierarchical progression from 1 – 6, the aim of this exercise is to reveal any gaps in each area of the safeguarding standards above.

