

## Educatius Ireland Safeguarding Policy

### Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact number
<b>Educatius Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Michele Harrison</b>	<b>Office: +44 161 428 4867 Mobile: +44 7747114003</b>
<b>Educatius Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Jemma Coleborn</b>	<b>Mobile: +44 7932 234592</b>
<b>Educatius UK &amp; Ireland Emergency Team</b>	<b>Michele Harrison Jemma Coleborn Tom Poole Cassie Beecham Marc Elles Mark Hellyer</b>	<b>24 Hour Emergency Phone: +44 161 428 4867</b>

### Glossary of Terms

**Abuse** – Abuse is when a person is intentionally harmed by another person. This may be over a period of time but may also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and can happen in person or online.

**Consent** – Consent refers to an individual’s voluntary and continuing permission for an intervention. The individual must have adequate knowledge of the reason, nature, likely consequences and risks of that intervention.

**Garda Vetting** – The process by which a check on an individual’s criminal history is made when applying to work in a role with vulnerable people or children. The rules for Garda vetting are set out in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-16.

**Defensible decision making** – Defensible decision making is when a clear rationale, based on legislation, policy and models of practice, is used to make and informed decision.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead** – The Designated Safeguarding Lead or DSL is the person within an organisation or group who is responsible for the management of safeguarding and maintains oversight of complex cases and coordination where allegations are made or concerns raised about a person.

**GDPR** – GDPR is the acronym used for the General Data Protection Regulation. This is an EU regulation and law on data protection and privacy for all individuals within the EU and EEA.

**Harm** – Harm refers to any ill-treatment including sexual abuse and ill-treatment that isn't physical, the avoidable deterioration and/or impairment in physical or mental health.

**Hate crime** – A hate crime is any crime that is thought to have been committed against someone for racist, homophobic or transphobic reasons, or in relation to any of the protected characteristics.

**Human trafficking** – Human trafficking refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, and harbouring of someone with the intention of threatening them or using force or coercion, and abusing the power of a position of vulnerability, and achieving coerced consent of a person having control over someone else by giving and receiving of payments or benefits, for the purpose of exploitation.

**TUSLA** – TUSLA are the Child and Family Agency, an independent legal entity comprising of HSE Children and Family Services, the Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board. TUSLA are the dedicated state agency responsible for improving wellbeing outcomes for children and operate under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013.

**Safeguarding** – Safeguarding is the term used to describe any activity that protects a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

**Self-neglect** – Self-neglect is the intentional or unintentional inability to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care, the results being serious consequences to health and wellbeing.

**Significant harm** – Significant harm refers to any ill-treatment or abuse that has resulted in the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

## **Policy Statement**

This guidance is applied to all students on the Educatius Ireland programme, aged under the age of 18. This guidance should be applied to all situations in which students are accommodated by Host Families whilst registered at an educational establishment in the Ireland.

The Children Act 2001 states that a child is a person under the age of 18. Educatius Ireland maintain a legal and moral duty of care for all children on the programme. The duty of care extends to all members of staff and Host Families. As such, all staff and Host Family members are required to read this policy carefully, must abide by the requirements listed within the document and should use the underpinning principles discussed within to inform their practice. Any member of staff and/or host family member who does not understand any aspect of this policy or who requires additional clarification should contact the Educatius Ireland Management team.

## **Ethos**

Educatus Ireland fully recognises the contribution they can make to protect children and support students during their participation in the High School Programme. We recognise that for young people, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive peers and clear lines of communication with trusted adults are important for their protection. Therefore, we are committed to:

- Establishment and maintenance of an ethos where young people feel secure and are encouraged to talk and feel listened to;
- Ensuring that young people know that there are adults within Educatius Ireland, their host family and their school who they can approach to talk to if they are worried or in difficulty;
- Ensuring that wherever possible, we will make every effort to establish effective working relationships with schools, host families, colleagues and other appropriate agencies;
- Responding to child protection and/or safeguarding concerns/issues in an effective and timely manner, ensuring that the welfare of the child is paramount;
- Ensuring that students/staff/host families involved in child protection issues receive appropriate support.

## **Educatus Ireland will:**

- Treat all students with respect and care according to their needs and without discrimination of any kind;
- Provide all Educatius Ireland staff members with Child Protection training which will be reviewed and renewed at least every two years;
- Provide an annual conference in which to discuss and review safeguarding procedures;
- Provide all staff and host families with copies of this Safeguarding Policy;
- Follow local procedures and make contact with TUSLA or local authorities within the area a child is placed should this be necessary;
- Be alert to signs of abuse within all areas of the students' programme;

- Deal with any disclosure, suspicion or complaint of abuse in a timely and appropriate manner;
- Utilise safe recruitment techniques in assessing the suitability of staff and host family members to work with children and young people.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

\*Contact numbers for DSL and DDSL can be found on page 1 of this document.\*

Michele Harrison has been appointed the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Educatius Ireland. The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding at Educatius Ireland and can be contacted directly during office hours. Jemma Coleborn is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and can be contacted directly during office hours. Educatius Ireland operates an emergency phone for issues arising outside of office hours (Monday – Friday 09:00 – 17:00). The member of staff holding the emergency phone will make contact as soon as is possible with the DSL to inform her of any situation. Michele and Jemma are DSL trained in line with current guidance and will undergo DSL training every two years. In addition, all Educatius Ireland Local Coordinators and staff have completed the TUSLA Children First e-learning programme. This is renewed every two years.

According to NSPCC, the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities include the following:

- Take a lead role in developing and reviewing Educatius' safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures;
- Take a lead role in implementing Educatius' safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning children and young people who take part in Educatius' activities are responded to appropriately;
- Make sure that everyone working with or for children and young people at Educatius, including host families, understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare;
- Make sure children and young people who are involved in activities at Educatius and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response;
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Educatius' activities;

- Take a lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Educatius may present a risk to children or young people. This includes:
  - Assessing and clarifying the information;
  - Making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate;
  - Consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management;
  - Following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures;
  - Liaising with, passing on information to and receiving information from statutory child protection agencies including the Garda and TUSLA;
  - Reporting regularly to the management of Educatius on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation;
  - Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse and keep up to date with new developments in this area;
  - Attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at Educatius.

### **Responsibilities of staff and host families**

All staff members and all host family members must:

- Do everything reasonable within the definition of your job role to keep children safe;
- Read and be aware of the Educatius Ireland Safeguarding Policy and follow the guidance within this policy;
- Respond to disclosure or concern respectfully and appropriately. Keep a comprehensive and concise record of any complaint, conversation or event and written reports and correspondence should be handed to the DSL to be stored appropriately;
- Report any child safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as is practically possible;
- All staff must undertake appropriate safeguarding training to be refreshed every two years as a minimum;

## **Staff-student and host family-student contact**

All staff members and all host family members must:

- Respect the physical integrity of students at all times. Staff and host family members must not engage in inappropriate contact of any kind;
- Respect the students' bedroom as a private space, entering the room to carry out specific responsibilities or exercising duty of care only. In this case, doors should be left ajar or another host family member made aware of the course of action being followed;
- Exercise prudence if transporting students individually and, where possible, it is sensible to ask the student to travel in the back seat of the car;
- Under no circumstance give tobacco, alcohol or drugs to students.

## **Forms of Abuse**

**These definitions have been taken from the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017):**

- Physical Abuse – When someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents.
- Emotional Abuse - The systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child.
- Sexual Abuse – 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 or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.
- 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 an 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.

## **Signs of Abuse**

The NSPCC list the following as general common signs of abuse, however this list is not conclusive:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality;
- Becoming withdrawn;
- Seeming anxious;
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive;

- Lacks social skills and has few friends, if any;
- Poor bond or relationships with parent(s);
- Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age;
- Running away or going missing;
- Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body;

## Disclosures

### Procedures for when abuse is suspected or a complaint is made

- Any staff member or host family member suspecting or receiving a disclosure of abuse must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the DSL is not available, please contact the Educatius Ireland Emergency Team and they will notify the DSL. If the complaint or concern involves the DSL, please contact the Deputy DSL.
- If a student discloses to you, staff or host family members must follow these steps:
  - Give the young person time to talk, listen carefully and keep an open mind;
  - Remember – it is not your job to investigate or form a judgement on what has happened;
  - Do not ask leading questions. Let the young person lead the conversation;
  - Keep a written record of the conversation. This should include the time, date and where the conversation took place. It should also include the statements made by the young person. Stick to the facts. If possible, ask the young person to sign the record to account for accuracy;
  - Be reassuring and supportive but do not promise confidentiality. Make clear to the young person that you have a responsibility to pass the information on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
  - Attempt to safeguard and preserve all available evidence (for example notes, text messages, clothing, laptops etc);
  - As soon as reasonably possible, notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead and complete the reporting form using the 'Child Protection Reporting Form' (Appendix 1).
  - Take advice from the DSL as to whether an alternative environment is required for the student to ensure safety. If so, assist with the organisation of this immediately.
  - Once your report has been passed to the DSL, it is important that staff/host family members continue to provide any information that they may hear/learn in relation to the case/incident.

Any non-staff or host family member who has reason to suspect abuse, should also inform the DSL immediately.

## **Allegations against Educatius Ireland staff or host families**

This procedure considers complaints against Educatius Ireland staff or host family members regarding claims they may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or;
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

## **Initial response to an allegation**

Where an allegation is made, Educatius Ireland has a responsibility to:

- Apply common sense and judgement;
- Deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently, and;
- Provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

Educatius Ireland aim to balance the need to protect students from abuse and harm and the need to protect staff and host families from unfounded and false allegations.

Educatius Ireland will first conduct a basic enquiry to establish the facts and determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future possible investigation. They will consider:

- Did the individual, or could the individual have come into contact with the child?
- Are there any witnesses?
- May there be any CCTV if in a public place?
- The DSL or Educatius Ireland Management team will contact TUSLA as required.

A suspension of staff will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all available options, subject to the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the student and the need for fair investigations. Student-facing staff members may be asked to work reduced responsibilities, removing the need for student interaction, whilst the issue is investigated.

Host Families are provided with the Educatius Ten Rules of Hosting, training video and a Host Family Handbook to help ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or allegations of harm to a student.

All staff are required to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concern or allegations about the behaviour of colleagues or host family members which they feel are



likely to put students at risk of abuse or other serious harm. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report, if it is done in good faith.

If Educatius Ireland ceases the employment of a member of staff as a result of that individual being found to be unsuitable to work with children, a prompt and detailed report will be issued by the DSL to TUSLA and any other relevant body.

### **Allegations against students**

If a student on the Educatius Ireland programme is accused of abuse against another student on the programme, Educatius will take all necessary action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both students.

If it is necessary for a student on the Educatius Ireland programme to be interviewed by the Garda, Educatius will notify parents/legal guardians as soon as possible and will ensure that the student is supported by an appropriate adult during the interview.

If the student's school or college decide that they must be suspended whilst an investigation into the allegation is carried out, Educatius Ireland will support the student and provide accommodation wherever possible. In the most serious of cases, it may be necessary for the student to return home.

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

Educatius Ireland will keep all child protection records confidential, disclosing only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of students.

Educatius Ireland will cooperate with relevant services, such as the police, to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection.

Except in exceptional circumstances we will always notify the school attended by the student of any concerns relating to a student's safety and/or welfare.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and will review annually.

Policy Date: 13.12.2022

Policy Version Number: 4

Policy Review Date: 13.12.2022

Responsible for Policy Review: Jemma Coleborn/Michele Harrison

## Appendix 1

### Child Protection Reporting Form

This form should be read in conjunction with the Educatius Ireland Safeguarding Policy.

This form should be completed by a member of staff or a host family member who receives information raising child protection concerns. They may receive this information through observation, from direct disclosure or from a student or other source. This form must be completed as soon as possible after the information is received.

Do not allow the completion of the form to delay any verbal notification of the concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead but pass the completed form to the DSL as soon as possible following verbal notification.

#### **Educatius Designated Safeguarding Lead is:**

Michele Harrison

Email: [michele.harrison@educatius.org](mailto:michele.harrison@educatius.org)

Mobile: 07747114003

Office: 0161 428 4867

#### **Educatius Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is:**

Jemma Coleborn

Email: [Jemma.coleborn@educatius.org](mailto:Jemma.coleborn@educatius.org)

Mobile: 07932 234592

#### **Data Protection information notes**

Educatius Ireland maintains child protection notes about students in order to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The contents of this form, once complete, will contain personal information subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Educatius Ireland will process the information within this form within the guidelines set in the General Data Protection Regulation. Students, and in some cases, legal guardians can request to view the content of this report however Educatius Ireland will seek legal guidance before sharing the information. This guidance will be sought by the DSL.

**To be completed by a member of staff or host family**

**Remember to follow the steps within Section 12 of the Educatius Safeguarding Policy when responding to a disclosure.**

**Report**

Date	
Time	
Place	
Member of staff present	
Full name(s) of student	
Confirmation that you have reassured the student but informed them that you cannot guarantee confidentiality and you have a legal responsibility to pass the information on to the DSL?	

Notes regarding the concern/allegation. Use a separate sheet if necessary and attach to this form. Keep in mind:

- What was said (stick to facts)?
- Was anyone else present during the conversation?
- When and where did the incident take place?
- Are there any witnesses?

Any additional comments you would like to make. For example, do you notice any signs of abuse or neglect?

Please include information here regarding any evidence – text messages, photographs, written notes, clothing etc.

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Any complaint or suspicion of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, to the Educatius Emergency Team.

DO NOT INVESTIGATE this matter as you may impact future investigations of outside agencies.

Please note below who you are reporting your concerns to and the date you have informed them:

Name:

Signature:

Date: