

Variety Ireland Safeguarding Children Policy Statement

1. Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Variety Ireland recognises that, under the Safeguarding Guidance for [Charitable Organisations working with Children Guidelines](#) as set out by Charities Regulator, it has a duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people. In this Guidance, 'a child' means a person under the age of 18 years.

2. Persons affected

- All employees of our charity
- All volunteers, which includes board members
- All persons contracted by the charity, to work on behalf of the charity

Guidance

Child welfare and protection policy is based on a legal framework provided primarily by the [Child Care Act 1991](#) and the [Children First Act 2015](#)*. The policy and practice that applies in this area is outlined in guidance issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs pursuant to section 6 of the Children First Act 2015.

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" is defined in Children First Act 2015 as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

* Variety Ireland recognises that as a charity, it currently provides a particular service to children in a manner that does not fall under the remit of either:

- **Appendix 1: Schedule Of Relevant Services Under The Children First Act 2015**
- **Appendix 2: Schedule Of Mandated Persons Under The Children First Act 2015**

However, as a charitable body that endeavours to carry out all its activities and procedures in line with good governance and ethics, it will do it's utmost to conduct its work in line with these legal frameworks.

Declaration of Guiding Principles

Here at Variety Ireland, we provide the following services to children/young people:

- Supply mobility equipment to persons under the age of 19 years
- Supply educational equipment to persons under the age of 19 years.
- Promote and advocate inclusion and respect for all children and young persons no matter what their background and ability.

We believe the following:

1. Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who avails of our service is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years.
3. All children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
4. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who utilises our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
5. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation.
6. Workers/volunteers/contractors must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.

3. Safeguarding Statement

Variety Ireland is committed to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It has:

- A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- A senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for Variety Ireland's safeguarding arrangements.
- A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services.
- Clear whistleblowing procedures and are suitably referenced in workers/volunteers/contractors training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.
- Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom Variety Ireland will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a Garda Vetting check.
- Appropriate supervision and support for workers/volunteers/contractors, including undertaking safeguarding training.

- Ensuring that workers/volunteers/contractors are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where members feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
- Workers/volunteers/contractors are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

Variety Ireland will endeavour to ensure that those acting on behalf of the Charity will understand:

- What they need to do and what they can expect of one another, to safeguard children.
- Core legal requirements, making it clear what individuals and Variety Ireland should do to keep children safe. In doing so, Variety Ireland seeks to emphasise that effective safeguarding systems are those where:
 - The child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates.
- That all members who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children.
- The requirement to share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children's social care.
- The necessity to use their expert judgement to put the child's needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child.
- The necessity to contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes.

Key principles will be communicated that:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children