

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers Child Protection Policy Statement

Section 1

These guidelines were created in the following context as described in the revised Children First policy(2011):

All statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with, and in direct contact with, children should have procedures and guidelines derived from and consistent with the current Children First: National Guidance for their staff and volunteers. The content of such local guidelines should not be at variance with the national guidance, but there may be particular specificity or elaboration appropriate to local circumstances.

Appendix 8 of the Children First: National Guidance states that: In developing local guidelines the definitions of abuse, reporting procedures and guidance on confidentiality SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED OR ADAPTED IN ANY WAY. This is because it is essential that there is consistency on definitions, the basis for reporting and the standard reporting procedures.

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers (ELF) undertake to provide a safe environment for young people; members, outreach participants and audience, to learn film and media production, appreciation and literacy skills, and to facilitate appreciation, enjoyment, contextualisation and engagement with film. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff and volunteers**;
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse (see Appendix 1 for categories of abuse);
- Confidentiality;
- Recruitment and selecting workshop leaders;
- Managing and supervising workshop leaders;
- Involvement of primary carers;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by workshop leaders;
- Complaints and feedback;
- Incidents and accidents

This policy will be reviewed on 27th September 2020 and each September thereafter.
Signed:

Artistic Director

Chairperson

*The Childcare Act 1991 defines a child as a 'person under 18 years other than a person who is or has been married' (S.2.1). ELF works with adolescents and people in their early 20s and will therefore use the term "young person" instead of "child" in referring to members and participants under 18.

** Staff will include volunteers (Chairperson & Workshop Co-ordinator), and all contract workers (workshop leaders, guest workshop leaders etc)

Updated: 20th June 2020

Section 2

Mission Statement

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers is an organisation dedicated to supporting young filmmakers and creating an environment to aid the development of their abilities in the practice and appreciation of film. ELF adopts a youth-centric approach, empowering the young people meaningfully without burdening participants with the administration and running of the organisation. ELF commits to providing a safe environment for young people, one in which diversity is appreciated and one in which freedom of expression and thought is supported. ELF fosters a competitive environment in which participants are encouraged to push themselves creatively. ELF also recognises its role as a community, facilitating constructive and supportive relationships. ELF is committed to investing in Ireland's future filmmakers and through support of emerging talent and to encourage a more diverse and inclusive industry.

Youth-centred approach:

- ELF respects the primacy of the young person's creative voice
- Members will be given meaningful involvement in the decision-making processes of the organisation, mediated by staff where appropriate.
- ELF Facilitators are to see themselves as analogous to coaches, supporting young people and with the aim of increasing their capacity and engagement with filmmaking.
- ELF will foster an environment of encouragement and support.
- Promote a friendly, playful and meaningful environment.
- Members and staff will be mandated to respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation
- Staff will conduct their practice so as to encourage an atmosphere of trust based on respect, acceptance and the communication of boundaries.
- Staff will offer criticism and evaluation when it is sought or when it has been described as part of the process, and always in a constructive manner. Members will be directed to offer criticism in the same manner.
- Staff will employ a flexible pedagogy adhering to a structure but exploiting 'teachable moments'.
- ELF will treat all young people as individuals.
- Staff will respect every young person's personal space, with clear communication about any bodily interaction and appropriate boundary setting.
- The organisation will encourage a space of risk-taking and ambition grounded in respect, with the appropriate concerns for the wellbeing of the young people and recognition of the particular needs and behaviour of individuals composing the group.
- Facilitators will respond to the different levels of readiness (in regards to the practice of filmmaking) with participants in the group, aiming to engage meaningfully with all participants.
- ELF will employ flexibility and to evaluate success in terms meaningful to the specific project and group.
- Staff will encourage young participants to push themselves to engage in the best film practice that they can, with an emphasis on telling engaging stories through the medium of film.
- Staff are encouraged to embrace the possibility of failure, but to do what is possible to mediate it.
- Staff will discuss boundaries when outlining activities with young people and their primary carers.
- Participants will agree to a 'contract of code of conduct' before beginning activities with each new group of young people. Members under 18 will have their contracts co-signed by a parent or guardian.
- Staff will facilitate meaningful feedback from groups and, where possible, encourage an ongoing discussion about the direction of the organisation.
- The organisation will seek and exploit opportunities for young filmmakers in the region and further afield.
- Staff, workshop leaders and guest workshop leaders will lead by example.

- Facilitators, workshop leaders and other individuals engaging with young people shall partake in an informal review with the organisation's director following projects where young people's input about this project will be discussed.
- ELF will try to accommodate young participants' other needs where appropriate.
- ELF will aim to be aware and ready regarding participants' personal needs - e.g. medical conditions.

Good Practice:

- ELF will maintain a contact database of all participants in compliance with GDPR regulations, relating to name, address, contact details, any special needs, attendance record, roles occupied on projects, details of any creative submissions, emergency contact details and any other information relevant to their involvement with the organisation. This data will be made available to facilitators as necessary for their capacity to deliver a workshop and ensure the welfare of participants. Abuse of this contact list will not be tolerated.
- All data relating to young people will be confidential, made available only at the behest of the young person and moderated to avoid any misuse.
- Any concerning event will be presented by a senior facilitator who was responsible for the young person(s) involved to the organisation's designated person for Child Protection as soon as possible and report will be logged.
- First Aid Kits will be provided at all ELF-led activities involving young people. Usage of items for these kits will be logged and they will be kept stocked and up to date.
- ELF volunteers will attend workshops and courses on child safety given by the TUSLA as and when they are available.
- Any incidents will be recorded and reported by the senior ELF Facilitator as soon as possible after the event has occurred, recognising the needs of the young people as the priority.

Appropriate Behavior for Staff and Volunteers:

- Staff will not use their position of authority to inappropriately single out individual young people for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or to humiliate them. This is not to limit playful discourse and human interaction, but care will be paid to the manner in which young people are communicated with.
- Artistic work will be evaluated on the terms appropriate to the practitioner, with a view to supporting development of craft while recognising that all practitioners, especially young people, will not operate to a consistent standard and that failure can be constructive.
- Staff will not socialise inappropriately with young people.
- ELF will endeavour to create an environment that maximises opportunities for young people, making the effort to maximise opportunities for participants in a safe environment.

Physical Contact:

- Seek consent and comfortable rapport with young people in relation to physical contact in workshops and rehearsals (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation).
- Avoid horseplay.
- Recognise the physical capacity of participants when assigning physically demanding tasks, without being discriminatory or exclusionary.
- Recognise and implement best practice for the safety of equipment, with staff intervening where necessary.

Health and Safety:

- Manage any dangerous materials.
- Adhere to best production practice for managing film shoots with a designated Production Manager for shoots that require planning responsible for implementing a safety plan.
- Adhere to relevant directives regarding Covid-19 and other health emergencies.
- Where possible, include young people in the development of safety procedures to link the concept of safety to practice of filmmaking.

- Do not adopt an 'overly cautious' approach that denies young people opportunities for the sake of being cautious beyond what is appropriate adhering to the directives outlined in the Risk Assessment
- ELF will operate with all activities covered by insurance.
- Staff will bring First Aid kits to locations used by ELF
- ELF will provide a safe environment
- When on location, the senior staff member shall ensure that there are contact details for all young participants, their emergency contacts and for the relevant emergency services and community contacts
- Encourage healthy eating habits, cater to dietary needs and ensure that a supply of water is available on all productions.

Environmental Awareness:

- ELF will endeavour to encourage filmmaking practice that is environmentally conscious and limit contributions to Climate Change.
- Staff and participants will respect locations leaving no rubbish or waste behind. Planning for removing rubbish in an environmentally responsible way will be the responsibility of the production manager and the young participants.
- ELF will foster a culture of environmental awareness and green filmmaking.

Section 3

Reporting Procedures

Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare?

The Designated Person for Garda Vetting and Reporting Procedures has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the designated person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardai where appropriate.

Designated Person can be contacted at ELF at 0879705104 - Pete Moles' mobile.

What would constitute reasonable grounds for concern?

- Specific indication from the young person that they have been abused - i.e. A disclosure or other modes of directly attempting to communicate this.
- An account by a person who witnessed the young person being abused.
- Evidence, such as injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way - with the recognition that certain staff will be more adept at diagnosing this than others and, where appropriate, concerns should be raised with the person charged with welfare or a senior staff member involved in the project if their is ambiguity or doubt, with appropriate respect for the privacy of the young person.
- Evidence, such as injury or behaviour which is consistent 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 indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication over a period of time, that a young person is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- Concerns raised by the behaviour by and/or feedback about relationship(s) between staff and young people.

How can staff record a problem?

All concerns, queries or issues need to be recorded in an incident book. This book is stored securely in the office and you will need to request from either the Designated or Deputy Designated

person. It is imperative that all staff ensure peoples' rights to confidentiality as outlined in ELF confidentiality statement.

Staff will need to record the following in the incident book:

- Your suspicions: what are they and why?
- Details of your concerns.
- Worrying observations.
- Behavioural changes.
- Record where possible dates and times of all of the above.
- Record the actions taken and outcomes of same.
- Record any materials used such as medical supplies.
- Name and contact details for any additional people involved, such as Gardai or medical personnel.

How do I deal with disclosure?

Please remember that in order to act in the best interest of the young person you should:

- Stay calm and listen to the young person, allow them enough time to say: what they need to say.
- Don't use leading or prompt details.
- Reassure the young person before any disclosure is made, that their disclosure may need to be passed on to appropriate authorities.
- Don't make the young person repeat the details unnecessarily.
- Explain in age appropriate language to the young person what will happen next.
- Treat the young person with respect and clarify the nature of the communication as being taken seriously.
- If necessary, an event will be suspended until the matter is resolved.
- Ensure that other young people are safe during this process.

What happens next?

- The person who has expressed the concern will be informed and kept up to date on a need to know basis.
- All details, actions and outcomes will be updated in the incident book through to the point of resolution.
- If a report is being made to TUSLA, a parent/primary carer will be made aware unless it is likely to put the young person at further risk.
- Ordinarily the Designated person or deputy designated person will be the ELF contact who will make contact with the TUSLA and or Gardai if the occasion arises. However, in the case of an emergency contact the local Duty Social worker or the TUSLA directly.
- In the case of emergencies outside of normal working hours where there is an immediate threat to a young person, contact the Gardai directly.

Section 4

Emerging Young Filmmakers Confidentiality Statement

We at ELF are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the young person and respect their privacy.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- ELF cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the young person are at risk.

- Primary carers and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless to do so might put the young person at further risk.
- Consent will be sought to use images of the young person for archives of shows, website, press and promotional materials, and for inclusion in filmed material to be shared online, in front of an audience.
- Records are kept in a safe and confidential manner under the control of the Designated Person for Garda Vetting and Reporting Procedure.

Section 5:

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers and Selection Policy Statement

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every position (paid or voluntary).
- ELF will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel and will build relationships with practitioners to establish a network of trusted filmmaking professionals.
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed or taken on as a volunteer.
- Some of the exclusions would include:
 - any child-related convictions
 - refusal to sign declaration form
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification
 - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children
 - failure to comprehend the specific requirements for working with young people
- There will be a three month probationary period for all permanent staff.
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and where available, this will be sought.
- Staff will be selected to offer a diverse and complementary skillset to the benefit of young people and the development of their filmmaking.

Section 6

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers Management Policy Statement

To protect staff and young people, we undertake that:

New staff will:

- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct and reporting procedures
- Undergo a probationary or trial period.
- Undergo Garda Vetting clearance before working with children (which is to be reviewed as required).
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement.
- Sign a contract that acknowledges that the above has occurred.
- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices.
- Receive child protection training where possible.

Section 7:

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers Statement on the involvement of Primary Carers

ELF is committed to being open with all our primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Seek the signature of primary carers on contracts for members under 18.
 - This will include signing Release Forms as a matter of course.
- Issue consent forms for additional activities, where relevant.
- Comply with health and safety practices relevant to film production and work with young people.

- Participants will be made aware and given ownership of these practices
- In response to Covid-19, film sets will have a Covid-19 Officer integrated into the practice of filmmaking
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines

If we have concerns about the welfare of the young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the young person.
- Inform the primary carers of any serious concerns about the young person, unless this action puts the young person at further risk.
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí.
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

ELF is a youth-centred organisation and is committed to putting the interest of the young person first. To that end we will:

- Contact TUSLA (Child & Family Agency) and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern.
- Be available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a young person's welfare.
- Remain aware of best practice regarding young people and recognise the specific needs of young people from diverse backgrounds.

Section 8:

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers policy for dealing with allegations made staff members

Where an allegation is made against a workshop leader by a young person, the Steering Committee will appoint an appropriate person/s to deal separately with both parties.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk.
- If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted.
- As outlined in Section 3 of these guidelines the reporting procedures must be followed. Both the primary carers and young person must be informed of actions planned and taken, unless this would expose the young person to more risk.
- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible:
 - of the nature of the allegation
 - of the actions being taken
 - of the actions expected from them as a result of the allegation being made
 - any other relevant information
- The workshop leader, volunteer or staff member shall be given the opportunity to respond when an allegation is made.
- The Child Protection Policy will be put in place (the workshop leader will be suspended pending investigation).
- The Chairperson of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible.
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against workshop leaders should be taken in consultation with TUSLA and Gardaí.

Section 9:

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers complaints and comments procedures.

- All complaints to ELF will be responded to within 4 weeks from date of receipt.

- All staff have a responsibility to direct complaints/comments to the Designated Person for Garda Vetting.
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to by the Designated Person for Garda Vetting.

Section 10:

Emerging Limerick Filmmakers Accidents Procedure

- ELF will maintain an up-to-date register of contact details of all children/young people involved in its activities.
- Young people's details should be cross referenced between the incident book and file.
- External organisations with whom ELF has significant dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance or be covered by ELF's insurance.
- First-aid boxes are available and regularly re-stocked.
- The location of the first-aid box(es) must be known to staff.
- Availability of the first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff.
- Young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material.
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk.
- Be aware of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.

In the event of a serious injury (a blow to the head, or injury resulting in severe loss of blood or loss of consciousness) incurred by a young person during ELF activities, the young person will be taken to hospital as a priority and the young person's parents/guardian will be contacted only after an ambulance has been called or lift to hospital arranged. Prior to production events, a call sheet will include details of the closest hospital.

In the event of a minor injury causing pain or discomfort, ELF will ensure that the young person is able to get home and will wait with them until their transportation arrives with a view to ensuring their safety and the safety of other participants.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse

The following are the four main categories of abuse as outlined in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. These are brief description of the information contained within that document. For the full definitions please refer to *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* 1993 (pp 32-34)

1 Neglect

“Neglect can be defined as being where the child suffers significant harm or impairment or development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care... The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.” (*Children First* p.31)

2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse usually happens where there is a relationship between a carer and a child rather than as a specific incident or incidents. *“Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.”* (*Child First* p 31)

Examples of emotional abuse in children include:

- Imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- Emotional unavailability by the child’s parent/carer;
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way;
- Under or over protection of the child;
- Use of unreasonably harsh discipline;
- Exposure to domestic violence.

3 Physical abuse

- Shaking
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation;
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant physical harm to a child.

4 Sexual abuse

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- Sexual intercourse with a child whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- Sexual exploitation of a child may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse;
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person.

APPENDIX 2

Contact Details -

Designated Person for Garda Vetting and Reporting Procedures for ELF

Pete Moles

Mobile: 087 970 5104

Tulsa - Limerick Duty Social Work Teams

Child and Family Agency, Rixtown Health Centre, Child Protection & Welfare, Old Clare Street

Tel: 061 483 091

Contact hours: 2 – 5pm

Any query or concern in relation to children out of hours should be reported to An Garda Siochana

Garda Station
Henry Street