

WRI's Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults

Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland (WRI) is a not-for-profit NGO that represents wildlife rehabilitators and the welfare and conservation of wildlife in Ireland. This policy applies to all staff, the board of directors, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of WRI.

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and vulnerable adults who receive WRI's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Rights and Responsibilities

WRI believes that children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practices in a way that protects them.

WRI acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, and complies with government guidance/requirements.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children and vulnerable adults: have a positive and enjoyable experience of animal conservation/welfare education with WRI, in a safe environment. are protected from abuse whilst participating in activities provided by WRI or outside of the activity.

WRI acknowledges that some children and vulnerable adults, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy WRI will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. WRI personnel are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Child Protection Resources listed below.
- ensure all WRI personnel respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and vulnerable adults by reporting to WRI's DSO, named below.
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- strive to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals, see recruitment measures below.

The policy and procedures are mandatory for all WRI personnel. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Risks & Risk Management

WRI assess risks posed by its various activities / events and take measures to guard against them.

Events e.g. lectures, conferences, courses, talks, and workshops

- A minimum of two WRI personnel are always present.
- Teachers, and parents where applicable, are encouraged to be present at the event.

Recruitment

- WRI have volunteer and director application forms, and conduct interviews for individuals wishing to volunteer.
- We reserve the right to request a Garda vetting form from an individual wishing to work with WRI
- References are requested
- Volunteers and directors are taken on a trial basis to begin with
- Volunteers are mentored by experienced WRI personnel

WRI Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) contact details:

Name Emma Higgs
Phone 086 1592097
Email emma@wri.ie

If anyone has a concern about abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults and does not want to report it to WRI, they should report it to a healthcare professional. In addition, the HSE has appointed a confidential recipient who will receive, and report concerns of abuse or neglect in confidence. The confidential recipient is Gráinne Cunningham O'Brien and she can be contacted by email on grainne.cunningham@crhealth.ie or Freephone [1800 949 494](tel:1800949494)

Review

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances: changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
as a result of any other significant change or event

Child Protection Resources

Online Child Safeguarding Resources offered by Kimmage Development Studies Centre
<https://www.iayo.ie/teacherandorganisertraining/free-online-child-safeguarding-resources-available/>

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/114c50-children-first-national-guidelines-for-the-protection-and-welfare-of/>

Links to relevant legal frameworks: children's rights, international and national law

A number of the child protection rights contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are already present in key pieces of national law, policy and guidance, including:

- Children First Act, 2015
- Better Outcomes Better Futures, DCYA, 2014
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act), 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, DCYA, 2011
- Criminal Justice Act, 2006
- Our Duty to Care, DCYA, 2002
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998
- Child Care Act, 1991
- The Constitution of Ireland