

Clare County Library's Child Safeguarding Statement

Clare County Library is committed to a child centred approach. Staff in public libraries aim to create an environment where children are listened to, given a sense of belonging and kept safe, and where parents are supported and encouraged and employees and volunteers who work with children and young people are supported and protected. This commitment encompasses all services and facilities in library branches and all library events and programmes carried out online. The facilitation and participation in online programmes by Clare County Library will closely reflect that of a physical setting i.e. workshop in a library space, including the number of designated responsible adults required to be present and all child safeguarding policies and procedures.

Clare County Library facilitators and staff undertake as part of the Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children to report any child protection or welfare concerns to the designated liaison person for Children First in Clare County Council. This may relate to a child or young person in a physical location in which the facilitator or staff member are working or virtually via an online event.

In order to meet these requirements we have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services in libraries and virtually. Clare County Library facilitators and staff will be familiar with Clare County Council's child safeguarding policies and statement and follow best practice at all times. If a parent/guardian has any protection or welfare concerns regarding library events and services they should contact the Clare County Council Designated Liaison Person, Damien McMahon on 065 6846422 or DMcMahon@clarecoco.ie.

The following are risks identified and procedures for managing these risks for both in-person use of library services and facilities and attendance at online events facilitated by the library.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk
Suitability of events for children and young people, in libraries and online.	Publicity shall specify the age range of the children at which the event is aimed.
Audience size at events in libraries and online.	A maximum attendance figure based on staff, space and type of activity will be decided in advance of all events.
Photography at in-person events in the library.	Photographs recording activities must not include images of identifiable children. Photos of the performer facing an audience taken from behind the children and of art/craft activities created during workshops are permitted.

Unaccompanied children in the library.	Children under the age of eight years must be accompanied by an adult at all time in the library for the child's safety. All libraries must display a sign stating this.
Child left at the library following a library event.	Start and finish times of activities in libraries should be clearly stated as part of a specific pick up / drop off policy specific to that service point. Booking sheets will be kept for events that are not attended by school classes. Contact numbers for parents will be requested. In the event of evacuation any unaccompanied children shall be led by staff to the assembly point where the booking sheet should be used to determine whether all children attending the event have been safely evacuated.
Children's access to and use of library books and other print and digital library resources.	Library staff cannot completely control what material children borrow or what material children access through the Internet and it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to be aware of the child's use of these resources.
Overcrowding in library branches after school.	Due to the large numbers using the library after school closing time, it may be necessary to restrict the amount of time that children remain in the library unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
Children truanting from school.	Library staff will try to establish which school the child is attending. The school will be contacted to inform the principal that the child is truanting and staff will request that a school staff member escorts the child back to school.
Disruptive behaviour by young people at the Library.	In dealing with disruptive children whose services are withdrawn, he/she will not be allowed use the library for one month. After this time he/she will be asked to sign a behaviour statement agreeing to good behaviour on

	<p>re-admittance to the library. A copy of this statement will be sent to parents. Parents must accompany minors when signing the form and the child will be advised that their behaviour will be monitored by staff.</p> <p>Further misbehaviour will result in an indefinite barring and parents will be contacted by the County Librarian. The child will not be permitted to use the library during this barring unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.</p> <p>Library staff may ask a library user to leave the premises without prior warning depending on seriousness of a violation.</p> <p>The Gardai will be called at the librarian's discretion and any abusive or threatening behaviour will result in the immediate withdrawal of all library privileges.</p>
Awareness of adults' behaviour in the children's library area.	Staff will ensure that the behaviour of adults in the children's area is appropriate at all times. Adults acting in ways which may threaten a child's safety will be asked to leave the library. Any such incidences will be documented.
Use of library toilets by children.	A child should be accompanied by a parent/guardian/ responsible adult who accompanies them at the library if he/she needs to use the toilet facility. Library staff will not accompany a child.
Lone worker/ lone child.	A lone worker will remain in an open clearly visible space with a child with library blinds open if a child is awaiting collection on their own at the library.
Registering for an online event.	Participants must register using a parent or guardian email address and consent/permission forms must be signed by parent/guardian in advance of a child participating in online events.
Use of tools such as a chat function and screen saving at an online event.	Staff and facilitators will use the management tools of online apps and platforms to moderate chat, control screen saving, control access and take whatever steps are necessary to ensure security.
Recording of online events.	It will be clearly stated if the online event is going to be recorded and parents / guardians must consent to

	<p>recording of an online event in advance. Participants may not record the online event.</p>
<p>Persons gaining unauthorised access to an online event.</p>	<p>Only the name used to register for an online event will be permitted to access the event. Registration details may not be shared with individuals who have not registered for the event. Unauthorised participants will be removed from the event.</p>
<p>Communication between facilitator and participants prior to, during or after an online event.</p>	<p>Online registration and communication between facilitators and young people will take place using parent/guardian email addresses, and an organisational email address that is provided and controlled by Clare County Library for that specific event.</p>
<p>Inappropriate behaviour from participants at an online event.</p>	<p>Parents /guardians will give prior agreement to supervise children while they are participating online and to ensure any content which they are submitting, or audiovisual contribution they are making is appropriate. Participants who behave in an inappropriate manner will be removed from the event.</p>
<p>Staff or facilitators identify reasonable grounds for concern for reporting a child or welfare or protection concern in the young person's home at an online event, including concerns viewed or heard in the background or off camera.</p>	<p>Clare County Library facilitators and staff report any child protection or welfare concerns to the designated liaison person for Children First in Clare County Council.</p>
<p>Online event provided by Clare County Library but hosted in an organisation outside the library such as a school.</p>	<p>Where links are shared with schools and other relevant organisations for pre-arranged events, it is that organisation's responsibility to ensure adherence to their own Child Protection guidelines.</p>