

# Acting Up! Child Protection Policy updated May 2024

## Introduction

At Acting Up!, trading under Spotlight Performing Arts, the safety and well-being of all children participating in our summer camps is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment where children can learn, grow, and have fun.

## Purpose

This policy outlines the measures and practices Acting Up! will implement to protect children from harm, in accordance with Ireland's Department of Education guidelines and best practices.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors working with Acting Up! summer camps.

## Principles

1. *\*Child-Centered Approach\**: All decisions and actions regarding child protection will prioritise the best interests of the child.
2. *\*Non-Discrimination\**: Every child, regardless of background, deserves to be protected from harm and abuse.
3. *\*Confidentiality\**: Information regarding child protection concerns will be handled with utmost confidentiality and shared only with relevant authorities.
4. *\*Transparency and Accountability\**: Our policies and procedures will be transparent and regularly reviewed to ensure accountability.

## Procedures

### *1. Recruitment and Training*

- All staff and volunteers will undergo thorough background checks, including Garda vetting.
- Comprehensive training in child protection will be provided, covering recognition of abuse, appropriate responses, and reporting procedures.

### *2. Code of Conduct*

- Staff and volunteers must adhere to a code of conduct that promotes respect, dignity, and the rights of children.
- Any form of bullying, harassment, or discrimination is strictly prohibited.
- Physical contact with children should be appropriate and only occur when necessary for the child's safety and well-being.

### *3. Reporting Concerns*

- Any concerns or suspicions of child abuse must be reported immediately to the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO).
- The CPO for Acting Up! summer camps is Tara, Camp Director and Founder of Spotlight Performing Arts.



- The CPO will assess the situation and, if necessary, report to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) or the Gardaí.

#### *4. Responding to Disclosures*

- If a child discloses abuse, staff must remain calm, listen carefully, and reassure the child.
- Staff should not investigate or promise confidentiality but should inform the child that they will need to tell someone who can help.
- Detailed records of the disclosure should be kept, including dates, times, and the child's exact words.

#### *5. Managing Allegations Against Staff*

- Any allegations of abuse against staff will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with legal obligations.
- The staff member will be suspended, pending investigation, to ensure the safety of children.
- The CPO will liaise with external authorities as required.

#### *6. Safe Environment*

- Activities and premises will be risk-assessed to ensure safety.
- Appropriate supervision ratios will be maintained at all times.
- Staff will be vigilant in recognising potential hazards and taking action to mitigate them.

#### *7. Communication with Parents and Guardians*

- Parents and guardians will be informed of our child protection policy and procedures.
- Open communication with parents will be encouraged, ensuring they feel comfortable discussing any concerns.

#### *8. Monitoring and Review*

- This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or best practices.
- Feedback from staff, parents, and children will be sought to improve our child protection measures.

### **Conclusion**

The protection of children is a collective responsibility, and at Acting Up!, we are committed to upholding the highest standards of safety and care. By implementing and adhering to this policy, we aim to create a secure and positive environment for all children attending our summer camps.

Tara O'Connor

Camp Director, Acting Up!

Founder and Studio Director, Spotlight Performing Arts

