

## **Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees, Students or Volunteers**

The protection and welfare of the children in Cairdeas are paramount and their safety and well-being is the priority. However, we also have a duty and responsibility, as an employer, in respect of all employees.

Two procedures must be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an employee:

1. Reporting procedure in respect of any child protection and welfare concern
2. The procedure in respect of the allegation against the employee

### **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees:**

It is recommended that two different people are nominated to manage each procedure. One will be the Designated Liaison Person (Manager) who is responsible for any issues under the service's Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures (such as reporting the matter to Tusla) and the Chairman will be responsible for addressing the employment issues.

Any child protection concerns arising through an allegation against an employee should be considered under the Cairdeas Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures and reported to Tusla without delay if necessary.

All staff and volunteers in Cairdeas must contact the Manager (DLP) should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any employee in the service.

Written records are very important. If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure should be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it. Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written record of the allegation should be made and a written statement should be sought from this person.

Where the manager becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee while executing their duties, the manager will privately inform the employee of the following: (i) The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her (ii) The nature of the allegation.

The employee will be afforded the opportunity to respond, the response will be noted and passed onto Tusla with the formal report.

All stages of the process will be recorded. An investigation may be required and will be carried out by the manager. A decision on how to proceed will be made within 2 weeks of the allegation. The employee will be given the opportunity to appeal the decision of the manager before any further action is taken.

Whether or not the matter is being reported to Tusla, the manager is always informed of an allegation of abuse or neglect against an employee.

### **Confidentiality:**

It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.

Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures should be adhered to.

It is very important to note that protective measures are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.

The manager will maintain regular and close liaison with Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána and ensure that no action by the service frustrates or undermines any investigation.

Further action will be guided by employment legislation, the contract of employment, the other policies and procedures of the service (including the disciplinary policy) and the advice of the investigating agencies.

### **Parents and Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees**

Parents have the right to contact Tusla to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about the employee or service.

Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be kept informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.

If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed, their parents will be informed immediately.