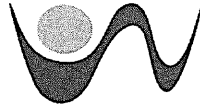


Child Safeguarding Statement

Library Service Wexford County Council

**Version 1.0
September 2022**



Revision number	Version 1.0	Document drafted by	Library Service
Date document ratified	28/9/2022	Assigned review period	2 Years
Document Approved by	Carolyn Godkin Director of Services	Date of Final Approval	26/10/2022
Next review date	Q3 2024	Responsibility for Review	Senior Executive Librarian, Library HQ.

Amendment history			
Date	Revision level	Details of amendment	Approval signature

1. Name of service being provided:

Wexford County Council Public Library Service

2. Nature of service

Wexford County Council Public Library Service provides a fully and varied service that is open to all children and young people in County Wexford free of charge. We view children and young people as valued citizens and we aim to provide a child-centred and fully inclusive library service to them.

Junior sections are provided in every branch library and they are furnished to encourage children to feel engaged and comfortable. Comprehensive children's collections are provided, books, educational toys and e-materials that reflect a diversity of needs in different age groups.

Educational and literacy development needs are catered for on an individual and school basis. As well as hosting family visits to our five branch libraries, two mobile libraries serve rural communities and schools.

Internet and wifi access is provided to children and young people subject to our Internet Access Policy. Children can participate in a wide range of activities in our libraries designed to entertain, teach, involve and stimulate the youngest members of our community.

The My Open Library service offers extended opening hours by providing library access to My Open Library members from 8am to 10pm every day. Staffed hours continue on the normal schedule. People aged 16 or over may register for this service. Under 16s can access only with a parent or guardian.

We strive to provide a safe, creative and welcoming space to all using the service by endeavouring to uphold the highest possible standards, in child protection and taking all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable people who use our service as outlined in *Children First; National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*.

3. Principles to safeguard children from harm:

Wexford County Council is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in the delivery of all our services and activities. The local authority has an

overall corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard the children accessing the local authority services and activities.

Wexford County Council is committed to;

- Promoting general welfare, health development and safety of children;
- Ensuring safe management procedures are in place for all staff and volunteers including: robust recruitment, selection, supervision and support procedures;
- Developing guidance and procedures for staff and volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the possible abuse or neglect of a child involved in the services or activities of the Local Authority;
- Ensuring Designated Child Protection Liaison Officers are appointed and accessible;
- Ensuring that the local authority has procedures in place to deal with an allegation of abuse made against an employee/volunteer;
- Raising awareness in the organisation about potential risks to children's safety/welfare;
- Developing procedures for responding to accidents and complaints;
- Developing and maintaining clear record keeping procedures;
- Ensuring a Code of Behaviour is in place to provide employees and volunteers with clear guidance on how to treat children and young people in the organisation;
- Developing a policy of inter-agency cooperation with Tusla and other agencies involved in the protection of a child.

Wexford County Council's child-centred approach

Wexford County Council's child-centred approach means to:

- Treat all children equally
- Listen to and respect children
- Involve children as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (verbal and physical)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Treat all children as individuals
- Respect a child's personal space
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids
- Lead by example
- Be aware of child time limitations e.g. school/exams when scheduling activities
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Be aware of the *Equal Status Act 2000-2010* which relates to discrimination based on nine grounds:
 - Gender
 - Civil Status
 - Family Status
 - Age
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Disability
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Membership of the Traveller community
- Use all information in respect of children only for the purpose for which it is given, subject to child protection concern(s).

4. Risk Assessment

Wexford County Council Public Library Service has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. A list of the areas of risk identified and the procedures for managing these risks is available upon request to Wexford County Council.

5. Procedures

- Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Child First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)* and TUSLA's *Child Safeguarding; A guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.
- In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:
 - *Wexford County Council Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement, 2021*
 - *Wexford County Council Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children, 2021*
 - *Wexford County Council Staff Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Persons in Public Libraries, 2022.*
 - *Wexford County Council Policy and Procedures for taking and storing Photographs and Videos, 2022.*
 - *Wexford County Council CCTV and Audio Recording Policy, 2020*
 - *Wexford County Council Data Protection Policy, GDPR, 2018*
 - *Wexford County Council Public Library Service Data Protection Privacy Statement, 2018*
 - *Wexford County Council Library Service Public Internet and WiFi Policy*
 - *National Garda Vetting Procedures, see <https://vetting.garda.ie/VettingProcedure/WhatsVetting>*

All procedures listed are available on request.

6. Reporting a Concern

Please contact one of the following if you have a concern or if you require any further information on the Councils Policies and Procedures:

- **Relevant Person**
 - Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services (County Secretary)
- **Child Protection Liaison Officers – Designated and Deputies**
 - Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services (County Secretary)
- **HR Support**
 - Senior Executive Officer, Human Resources

The above persons can be contacted as follows:

- By telephone 053 9196000
- By Email customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie

Anyone can report a concern about a child.

If you have any concerns about a child you should report it to TUSLA. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Any member of the public who has a concern about a child can contact the TUSLA local social work duty service in the area where the child lives for advice about reporting your concerns. In County Wexford, this is:

Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ely House Wexford 053 91 98201

In the event of any emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with TUSLA, you should contact An Garda Síochána. If a child is in danger outside of office hours you can contact the Gardai. For further information on Child Protection see www.TUSLA.ie.

Further information on Child Protection – www.tusla.ie

7. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 8th February 2024 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: Eileen Morrissey Wexford County Librarian
Date: 20/10/22

Eileen Morrissey
County Librarian
Wexford County Council
Carricklawn
Wexford

Signed: Carolyne Godkin Director of Services
Date: 26th Oct 2022

Carolyne Godkin
Director of Services
Wexford County Council
Carricklawn
Wexford

For queries please contact
Eileen Morrissey, County Librarian; or the Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer, SEO
Corporate Affairs (County Secretary) for Wexford County Council under the Children First
Act 2015.