

SVP NATIONAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

SVP is committed to keeping children safe from harm. We keep children at the centre of our work and promote their wellbeing. Our members, non-member volunteers and staff are committed to creating a safe environment for children and young people to grow and develop. All children will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. SVP provides a wide range of educational and recreational activities and services to children under 18 years of age nationally through our network of regions and local Conferences.

SVP Services to Children include:

- Community based creches and childcare services that offer a high-quality service for children aged between 5 months to 12 years, ranging from full-time, part-time, sessional and afterschool.
- Prison Visitor's Centres provides a supportive space, advice and guidance service for children and families visiting others in prison.
- Residential holidays children aged between 7 and 12 and weekend breaks on occasion for smaller groups.
- Family Resource Centres providing book clubs to children from 6 years to 12 years, mental health support workshops for children, activities for children in direct provision, homework clubs, academic tuition and stress management classes for children and play therapy.
- Youth clubs and Youth services providing educational opportunities and social supports to children and young people.
- Young SVP – A youth development programme delivered in conjunction with secondary schools, youth groups and third level colleges.
- Transition Year student placements are supported by the SVP through work experience mainly in retail.
- Visitation programme to support vulnerable groups.

The Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVP) is a volunteer lead national organisation covering the thirty two counties. SVP is committed to safeguarding children by working under the guidance of our national safeguarding policies and procedures. The Children First Act 2015 defines harm of a child as ill treatment, neglect, assault, or sexual abuse, and explains what to do if you are concerned. SVP has procedures to keep children safe from harm when they are using our services, in line with the Children First Act 2015. All our staff, members and volunteers are trained in how to respond to child protection and welfare concerns. We respond to all concerns as quickly as possible with the assistance of the SVP National Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Network with the support of the National Safeguarding Office.

SVP has a strong management structure in place to ensure that the organisation is run well, the work of the Society is overseen by SVP National Management Council and SVP trustees. To ensure compliance with regulations and to continue the commitment to good practice in the area of Safeguarding the SVP has implemented a support mechanism of a National Safeguarding Committee made up of representatives of all regions. Part of the remit of the Safeguarding Committee is to develop a national safeguarding strategy in consultation with Regional Councils, co-ordinate and have oversight of safeguarding within the Society. Child Safeguarding activity within the Society is also supported by the National Network of Designated Liaison Persons with the support of the National Safeguarding Manager, the National Children's Services Manager and National Risk Manager. As part of its commitment to protecting children from harm SVP have commissioned Keeping Children Safe (KCS) International to audit all SVP Children's Services and has successfully completed Level II Certification.

All SVP children's activities and services have a completed Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding

Statement (available on line and displayed locally in each service) in accordance with requirements of the Children First Act 2015. Each children's service or activity is required to complete a Risk Assessment and service specific Child Safeguarding Statement annually and submit to SVP Regional President who will in turn submit to SVP National Management Committee for compliance purposes. Each of the Service Risk Assessments completed indicate the circumstances of potential harm, the likelihood of harm occurring, how a proper balance must be struck between protecting children and young people and respecting the rights and needs of parents / guardians and families, and where there is a conflict the welfare of the child and young person comes first, and lists the policy, guidance, process and practice required to alleviate the risks. The Risks identified at Corporate Level are in the following categories:

	Potential Risk	Policies & Procedure to Control Risk
1.	Risk of harm to a child by staff, volunteer, peer or Members of the Society.	<p>Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children through the following policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups including awareness training requirements, code of conduct and reporting requirements and procedures - SVP Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable. - SVP HR Recruitment Policy - SVP Volunteer Handbooks - SVP Visitation Handbook - SVP Supervision Policy - SVP Garda Vetting Policy - SVP Data Protection Policy - HR Handbook and Code of Conduct and Behaviour Management Policy - Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education - Childcare Service Childcare policy and procedures - Childcare Services Admissions Policy and Procedures - Childcare Parent Handbooks. - SVP Rule, 2012 for volunteer Members.
2.	Risk of harm to a child due to a lack of awareness to recognise and report concerns.	<p>SVP Recognising and Reporting Welfare and Protection Concerns About Children through the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable. - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups - Display of Infographics on Recognising and Responding to 1. Child Abuse, 2. Childhood Neglect, and 3. Domestic Violence and Coercive Control. - Provision of Child Safeguarding Awareness induction and refresher training - DLP / Mandated Persons role training and ongoing refresher training and quarterly DLP national network meetings and Learning & Development events with a focus on risks of child abuse within the context of SVP - Upkeep of DLP directory as the main reporting pathway and published on SVP website and in location across services and activities. - Safeguarding as a standing agenda item. - Data Protection Policy and GDPR - SVP Volunteer Policy - SVP Supervision Policy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR Staff Handbook - SVP Visitation Handbook - SVP Volunteer Handbooks - SVP Student Placement Guide – SVP <i>Young SVP</i> policy
3.	Risk of harm to a child due to poor attitude and behaviour, including bullying by staff, volunteers, peers and anyone associated with SVP.	<p>SVP Code of Conduct for those working with children through the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups Section 5 and Section 7 - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable. - Anti-Bully Policy as a stand-alone policy for service users as peers, s / guardian and for staff - SVP Volunteer Policy - SVP HR Recruitment Policies and HR Handbook - SVP Dignity & Respect Policies - SVP Visitation Handbook - SVP Rule - SVP <i>Young SVP</i> policies and protocols including Code of Behaviour and student placements - SVP Code of Conduct. - Reporting pathways displayed in services and relevant location. - Policy on staff / service users ratios - HR Occupational Health approach to mitigate risk of inappropriate and bullying behaviour including support for staff to manage work related stress and awareness sessions. - Conflict Management processes - SVP Service User and Parent Handbooks - SVP Rule including Article 7. - Age and language appropriate complaint reporting pathways for child, families and significant others, and anyone associated with SVP. - Service User Information Booklet and Code of Agreement including Dignity and Respect and how to speak up and how to report bullying and to whom.
4.	Risk of harm to a Child on an overnight, residential and day trip.	<p>SVP Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups – Managing trips away guided by the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable including the process for reporting concerns, referral system and risk assessment. - Code of Conduct - Referral process and assessment of appropriate placement as a preventative measure. - SVP Supervision policy - Service User Handbook - Handbook for Parents and Guardian
5.	Risk of harm to a child through the use of technology and social media including communication platforms, photography, devices, internet, video, retention and sharing images.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable including consent policy and code of conduct and safe use of devices - SVP Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups - SVP Social Media Policy - Safeguarding Infographic to raise awareness of the Coco Law - The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 including reporting pathways within SVP. - SVP Communication Policy - SVP Recruitment Policy and Procedures including SVP Garda Vetting Policy - SVP HR Handbook - SVP Data Protection Policy

6.	Risk of harm to child during student placements, by staff, volunteers, Members, by others on national and international student and work placements, and any one associated to SVP, including visitors and service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable. - SVP HR Policy and Procedures including Staff Handbook including Code of Conduct and Dignity in the Workplace policy to address bullying. - SVP Supervision Policy - SVP Volunteer Policy - SVP Transition Year Policy in keeping with Protocols and placement agreements. - SVP Garda Vetting in general and for children recruited on placement aged over 16 years, with parental consent. - SVP Visitation Handbook - Safeguarding Awareness Training including DLP Reporting Pathway on induction and DLP contact details to be made known to students by student placement supervisor. - Safe recruitment protocols including all other student and work related placements through partners.
7.	Risk of harm to a child by announced or un-announced visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable including Infographics displayed on Recognising and Reporting risk of abuse to a child. - Safeguarding Awareness Training for staff, volunteers and Members. - Sign In Sheet for announced and un-announced visitors. - SVP Policy and Procedures for In-Service Days involving staff visiting services and activities involving children. - SVP HR House Staff Handbook - SVP Volunteer Handbooks - SVP Visitation Handbook - Code of Conduct. - Parent Handbooks - Childcare Services Visitors Policy including sign-in sheet managed within SVP Data Protection policy and Data Retention Policy and GDPR - Childcare Policies and Procedures - Service 'Critical Incident' Policy and SVP Serious Incident and Risk Management Policy. - SVP Supervision policy
8.	Risk of harm to a child through bullying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Policy on Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups. - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable including Infographics displayed on Recognising and Reporting risk of abuse to a child. - Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education - Anti Bullying Policy - Code of Conduct, Behaviour & Behaviour Management Policy. - Childcare Policies and Procedure. - Parent Handbooks. - Volunteer Handbooks. - Visitation Handbook - Staff Handbook. - SVP Supervision Policy - Childcare services Volunteer Policy & Procedure.

9.	Risk of harm to a child by a lack of supervision, and compliance with safe practices and procedures, and safeguarding policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP Working Safely with Vulnerable Groups including requirement for risk assessment in each service and activity - SVP Policy on Recognising and Reporting Welfare & Protection Concerns About Children or Adults Who May Be Vulnerable including Infographics displayed on Recognising and Reporting risk of abuse to a child. - SVP Supervision Policy - SVP HR Staff Handbook - SVP Volunteer Handbooks - SVP Membership Visitation and SVP Rule 2012 to ensure all Members operate under the supervision of the Conference President and provide visitation services in pairs to support vulnerable groups including home visitations to families in the community. - Student Placement Policy - SVP Risk Management Policy and Serious Incident Policy -
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The following procedures are in place across the SVP network to address the identified risks as part of our safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Procedures for managing allegations of abuse or misconduct by volunteers, employees and anyone operating on behalf of SVP, visitors and strangers, against a child availing of our services.
- Procedures to access child safeguarding awareness training, including the identification of, and reporting of harm.
- Procedure for Child and Family Services to maintain a list of mandated persons.
- Procedures to select, train and to maintain a list of SVP National Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) Network.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.
(All procedures are available on request.)

SVP recognises that implementation is an ongoing process – we are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm.

The Relevant Person for our National Child Safeguarding Statement is: Dr Jonathon O'Rourke

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICE, 92-92 SEAN MACDERMOTT STREET, DUBLIN 1, D01 WV38.

Landline:01-8848200

E: safeguarding@svp.ie

The National Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on: **11th March 2026.**