

SVP WORKING SAFELY WITH **VULNERABLE GROUPS**

Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland Policy and Procedures
May 2019



Society of St Vincent de Paul



SVP WORKING SAFELY WITH **VULNERABLE GROUPS**

Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland Policy and Procedures
May 2019



Society of St Vincent de Paul

I CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
1. DECLARATION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES	9
2. KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	10
2.1 Named Persons	11
2.2 Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs)	11
2.3 Mandated Persons	11
2.4 Relevant Person	12
2.5 National Safeguarding Manager	12
2.6 National Safeguarding Committee	12
3. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	13
3.1 Best practice in recruitment and management of employees and volunteers	13
3.2 Under 18's as employees / volunteers	14
4. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING	15
4.1 Types of safeguarding training	15
4.2 Ensuring safeguarding training is consistent with legislation	16
4.3 Keeping training records	16
5. SAFE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES	17
5.1 Working safely with participants	17
5.1.1 Keeping a register	17
5.1.2 Record keeping	17
5.1.3 Consent	17
5.1.4 Health and safety	17
5.1.5 Accidents and incidents	18
5.1.6 Safe supervision	18
5.1.7 Code of behaviour for participants	18
5.1.8 Ratios	19

5.1.9 Use of photography, video and/or social/digital media	19
5.1.10 Safeguarding risk assessment	19
5.2 Working in partnership with other agencies	20
5.3 Managing trips away	20
5.3.1 Planning and documentation	21
5.3.2 Accommodation	21
5.3.3 Preparing participants programme	21
5.3.4 Emergency procedures	22
5.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation	22
6. SAFE MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS	23
6.1 Code of conduct	23
6.2 Supervision	25
6.3 Disciplinary procedures	26
7. SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT SAFEGUARDING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS	27
7.1 Communications strategy	27
7.2 Working in partnership with parents/guardians and vulnerable groups	28
7.3 Empowering participants to claim their rights	29
7.4 Anti-bullying policy	30
8. COMMUNICATION, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING GUIDING PRINCIPLES	32
8.1 Implementation, monitoring and review of SVP's principles and procedures	32
8.2 Complaints procedure	32

INTRODUCTION

This policy is applicable to all SVP members, non-member volunteers, employees, or others acting on behalf of SVP.

It is to be implemented in all SVP services and activities e.g. home visitation, youth development, special works including homeless services, retail services, services for children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection, Regional Offices, National Office and Shared Services.

It applies to working with vulnerable groups which includes children, young people under the age of 18 years, and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection.

The policy is also applicable to all SVP services and activities in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

1. SVP Declaration of Safeguarding Guiding Principles

SVP is committed to creating a safe, healthy and inclusive environment for all, particularly the children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection. We are committed at all times to ensuring their safety and welfare through upholding children's rights specifically and human rights generally.

Through our network of local Conferences, Areas, Regions, and professional services, SVP provides a variety of supports to potentially vulnerable groups including children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection.

These services include:



HOME VISITATION

PRISON AND HOSPITAL VISITATION

RESOURCE CENTRES

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

YOUTH PROGRAMMES

DAY SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

HOMELESS SERVICES

SOCIAL HOUSING

RETAIL SERVICES

SVP BELIEVES THAT THE BEST INTERESTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS, INCLUDING CHILDREN, AVAILING OF OUR SERVICES ARE PARAMOUNT.

These guiding principles apply to all members, non member volunteers, Conferences and Committees, employees including CE and FAS participants, students on placement, contractors and any others undertaking the work of SVP. We will safeguard children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection by:

- » Reporting concerns to Statutory Authorities who need to know and involving parents, carers, children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection;
- » Recognising the welfare of the child is of paramount importance;
- » Recognising the risks posed to adults who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection;
- » Following carefully the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of members, non member volunteers and employees, including criminal record checks;
- » Requiring all people acting on behalf of SVP to conduct themselves in a way that reflects the mission and ethos of SVP;

We review our guiding principles and safeguarding procedures every two years or sooner if necessary depending on service provision and any changes in legislation or national policy.

A full list of Designated Liaison Persons is available at www.svp.ie

2. KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 NAMED PERSONS

All organisations that provide services to vulnerable groups should develop specific policies and procedures on how to create a safe environment.

To assist with this, the SVP has appointed a named person - SVP National Safeguarding Manager - to develop our guiding principles and safeguarding procedures.

SVP National Safeguarding Manager is responsible for leading the development of guiding principles and safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice. The National Safeguarding Manager will liaise with all key employees, volunteers and committees who have responsibility for working with vulnerable groups.

The National Safeguarding Manager will also assist in reviewing safeguarding procedures.

2.2 DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSONS (DLPS)

The role of the Designated Liaison Person is to receive safeguarding protection and welfare concerns from employees/ volunteers and to report concerns to the Relevant Statutory authorities.

For more details on the role and responsibility of DLP's see:

- ⦿ SVP Recognising and Reporting Welfare and Protection Concerns about Children or Adults who may be Vulnerable (ROI);
- ⦿ SVP Recognising and Reporting Welfare and Protection Concerns about Children or Adults at Risk or in Need of Protection (NI).

2.3 MANDATED PERSONS

Mandated persons are required in the Republic of Ireland as per Children First Act 2015, they are people whose roles have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm.

- ⦿ List of mandated persons working in SVP is available from National Safeguarding Manager;
- ⦿ For a full list of people who are classified as mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) see: www.tusla.ie.

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on 'mandated persons' to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Túsła.

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations. These are:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Túsła;
2. To assist Túsła, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report (known as 'mandated assisting').

Harm' is defined in the Children First Act 2015: "harm' means, in relation to a child—:

- (a) Assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or;
- (b) Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.

A mandated person is required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. Harm is defined as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

For more information on reporting concerns, see the documents *“SVP recognising and reporting welfare and protection concerns about children and vulnerable adult (ROI) and (NI)”*.

2.4 RELEVANT PERSONS

As a provider of a relevant service under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), SVP is required to appoint a relevant person.

The relevant person is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement; their name and contact details are included in the Child Safeguarding Statement.

This role is carried out nationally by an appointee of the National President and National Management Council.

Each Relevant Service will also appoint a Relevant Person for their individual service.

2.5 NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING MANAGER

The National Safeguarding Manager is available to support and promote the safety and welfare of all vulnerable groups in SVP.

It will be their role and responsibility to:

- ⦿ Have responsibility and oversight of Garda Vetting and Access NI processes;
- ⦿ Provide advice, support, and case management for DLP’;

- ⦿ Provide advice, support, and case management of serious incidents, safeguarding complaints, retrospective disclosures, death in service reviews etc.;
- ⦿ Provide advice, support for National Safeguarding Committee – including quality assurance process.

2.6 NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The National Management Council (NMC) is the main national governance body for the SVP, and the charity trustees as per the Charity Act 2009. It has overall responsibility for strategy, operations and policy.

The NMC has established a number of sub-committees to assist it with its work, one of which is the National Safeguarding Committee.

This group will consist of representatives from each SVP Region and the Safeguarding Regional Representative is nominated by the Regional President. External professionals working in the area of safeguarding and governance will also be invited to join the Committee. The group will include at least one delegate from Northern Ireland to represent the differing legislative and jurisdictional framework.

It is the role and responsibility of the committee:

- ⦿ To develop an Annual National Safeguarding Strategy and present it to the NMC for consideration and approval. The strategy should incorporate current NMC objectives, incorporate achieving compliance with any legislative requirements and industry best practice, and reflect SVP values;

- ⦿ Develop an annual work plan, derived from the national strategy which would identify specific goals and actions to be achieved on an annual basis, in consultation with Regional Councils;
- ⦿ Prepare an annual report for the NMC which sets out a description of how the previous annual safeguarding strategy has been implemented in the previous year, giving an analysis which identifies trends and the key issues faced by the Society and proposals for addressing these issues;
- ⦿ Review and evaluate progress in the implementation of the national strategy;
- ⦿ To draft, and present to the NMC for approval, national policies on safeguarding including Garda Vetting / Access NI checking;
- ⦿ To periodically review existing national safeguarding policies and, if appropriate, propose changes for adoption by the NMC;
- ⦿ To assess levels of compliance with existing national safeguarding policies and report to the NMC;
- ⦿ Serve as a formal mechanism to exchange ideas and concerns related to safeguarding;
- ⦿ Serve as a communications vehicle between the regions and the national structure.

3. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Putting in place good procedures in recruitment is a central element in ensuring the safety and welfare of vulnerable groups involved in SVP. SVP will take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with vulnerable groups by adopting and consistently applying a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers.

3.1 BEST PRACTICE IN THE RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Best practice in the recruitment and management of employees and volunteers includes:

- ⦿ Clear definition of the role;
- ⦿ Providing information relevant to the post;
- ⦿ Seeking information from the applicant;
- ⦿ Access to police vetting in the relevant jurisdiction;
- ⦿ Taking up of references;
- ⦿ Good HR practices in interviewing;
- ⦿ Induction;
- ⦿ Training;
- ⦿ Probation period;
- ⦿ On-going supervision and management.

SVP has procedures covering the following:

- ⦿ Recruitment and selection;
- ⦿ Police vetting;
- ⦿ Induction including induction on SVP guiding principles and safeguarding procedures;

- ⦿ Supervision and support for employees and volunteers.

The implementation of thorough recruitment and selection procedures helps keep vulnerable groups safe in SVP.

In developing our recruitment and selection procedures we include:

- ⦿ **Job/role descriptions** for each employee and volunteer position. Job/role descriptions describe the range of duties required by each role, accompanied by a person specification that describes the type of attributes we require the post holder to have (e.g. their experience, qualifications and other requirements);
- ⦿ **Advertisements** for employee/volunteer roles. We aim to circulate as widely as possible roles working with vulnerable groups;
- ⦿ The use of a **written application form**. An application form ensures all prospective employees/volunteers provide the information SVP deems appropriate to the role they are applying for. In addition, the information supplied by the applicant should be seen only by those directly involved in the recruitment process (see SVP Membership Application Pack for Membership Application Form and HR Recruitment and Selection Guide for Sample Employee Application Form);
- ⦿ A signed **declaration** on the application form which allows individuals to self-declare any relevant information in relation to their suitability to work with vulnerable groups;
- ⦿ Thorough **vetting procedures** are applied to all prospective candidates. Candidates consent to undergo Police Vetting in accordance with the legal requirements in the relevant jurisdiction and SVP policy and procedures.

SVP also has a responsibility to report anyone who presents a risk to vulnerable groups;

- ⊙ Attending for **interviews** ensures employees/volunteers are assessed for suitability and SVP representatives will help to get a sense of the candidates' attitudes, values, knowledge and skills, in particular their commitment to welfare and safeguarding of vulnerable groups. A marking system is also in place so that all appointments can be justified and the process is fair and transparent. This also assists in providing feedback to candidates;
- ⊙ As part of the process **references** will also be sought, contact details for two referees, who are not family members or relatives, will be requested for preferred applicants. References should include the last employer and all references should be provided in writing and then followed up either by phone or in person. Referees will be asked specific questions regarding the suitability of the preferred applicant and their history and suitability of working with vulnerable groups. References will be kept on files as part of the record of the recruitment process;
- ⊙ **Seeking evidence** to verify qualifications and experience;
- ⊙ **Requesting identification** from all applicants, providing photo identification (passport / driving licence) which verifies their identity, name and date of birth to the standard required by the vetting legislation in the relevant jurisdiction. A photocopy will be taken for the file, and signed by the recruiting manager to validate the information;
- ⊙ **Sign-off** by relevant Conference, Area or Regional President or Service Manager for employee roles.

Once SVP has selected our preferred candidate and signed the appropriate contracts, we take further steps to ensure we have the appropriate person. These include:

- ⊙ Induction for new employees/volunteers on the organisation's policies and procedures, in particular in relation to safeguarding vulnerable groups;
- ⊙ A probationary/trial period. Every new appointee should be reviewed within an agreed period of time. The length of time will vary depending on the nature of the post. A review should be held at the end of the probationary/trial period;
- ⊙ Training (see Section 4);
- ⊙ Supervision and support (see Section 6).

3.2 UNDER 18S AS EMPLOYEES/ VOLUNTEERS

Young people under 18 are actively encouraged to take part in SVP activities; however, due to the sensitive nature of some of the Society's work it is recommended that they are over 16 and:

- ⊙ They must have written permission from a parent, guardian or carer to be involved, and undergo the usual recruitment and selection process;
- ⊙ They must be supervised at all times by an employee/volunteer and written record of this should be maintained;
- ⊙ At no stage should under 18's have unsupervised access to vulnerable groups;
- ⊙ This policy and procedure will be communicated to volunteers/employees who are under 18.

4. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All people carrying out the work of SVP will receive training in safeguarding vulnerable groups (children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk, in need of protection), including information about how to respond to suspicions and allegations of abuse.

Attendance at training will be required at least every 3 years.

4.1 TYPES OF TRAINING AVAILABLE

To maintain high standards and good practice generally, training will be provided on an ongoing basis. The nature of the training will depend on the range of activities provided by the Conference or Service and the needs of the members, volunteers and employees.

TRAINING TYPE	ROLE
Online safeguarding in home visitation module and face to face induction training (3 hours)	Home Visitation members Membership Support Officers
Child Protection Awareness Programme (3 hours)	Volunteers working directly with children
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (2.5 hours)	Volunteers working directly with vulnerable adults
Children First Foundation (1 day)	Employees working directly with children Mandated Persons Volunteers in children's residential environment
Children First DLP training (1 day)	Designated Liaison Persons in all areas of SVP work
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults for DLP'S (1 day)	Designated Liaison Persons in all areas of SVP work
Specialist Safeguarding training relevant to specialist service provision	Available on discussion with relevant National Manager
Refresher training	As required.

4.2 ENSURING SAFEGUARDING TRAINING IS CONSISTENT WITH LEGISLATION

SVP will ensure that the content of any training accessed or delivered about safeguarding vulnerable groups is consistent with:

For the Republic of Ireland:

- ⦿ *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, the Children First Act 2015 and Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. Tusla also provides *Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes* (available at www.tusla.ie);
- ⦿ *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons At Risk Of Abuse National Policy And Procedures 2014 (Republic of Ireland)*.

For Northern Ireland:

- ⦿ *The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*;
- ⦿ *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)*;
- ⦿ *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People (2016)*.

4.3 KEEPING TRAINING RECORDS

SVP gathers and retains a record of training information including:

- ⦿ Date and name of training programmes delivered;
- ⦿ Names of employees/volunteers who attended and their position within the organisation;
- ⦿ Details of employees/volunteers who did not receive training but need to complete it;
- ⦿ Number of employees/volunteers trained;
- ⦿ Training programmes completed by each employee/volunteer (e.g. induction, child safeguarding training, DLP training, refresher training, etc.);
- ⦿ The names of the trainers who delivered the programme and the organisation they were from;
- ⦿ A signed receipt of all employees/volunteers who have been given a copy of the organisation's declaration of guiding principles and safeguarding procedures.

5 | SAFE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Part of keeping vulnerable groups safe and reducing the likelihood of harm is having clear guidelines in place regarding how activities are organised and run.

A key element of this is our Code of Conduct for all employees and volunteers (see Section 6.1 below). In addition, the Society has in place the following measures for planning and running activities to minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to vulnerable groups while accessing the Society's services.

5.1 WORKING SAFELY WITH PARTICIPANTS

5.1.1 Keeping a register

- ⦿ Have criteria for membership of the organisation;
- ⦿ Have a registration system for each participant;
- ⦿ Keep a record on each participant, including address and family contact numbers;
- ⦿ Keep medical details, any individual needs and emergency contact telephone numbers accessible.

5.1.2 Record keeping

The Society will keep up-to-date records of the following:

- ⦿ Attendance;
- ⦿ Accidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to senior management);
- ⦿ Incidents;
- ⦿ Consent forms;
- ⦿ Any complaints or grievances.

5.1.3 Consent

Those acting on behalf of the Society should ensure that signed consent from parents, guardians or carers is obtained prior to the participation of children, young people in events, activities and groups.

In the case of adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection, consent should also be obtained from parents, guardians or carers if the adult does not have the capacity to give consent themselves.

Parents or guardians should be asked to indicate any specific dietary requirements and/or medical or special needs.

5.1.4 Health and Safety

The Society will ensure that:

- ⦿ Any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards;
- ⦿ There is sufficient heating and ventilation;
- ⦿ Food preparation areas, where they exist, are sanitary and meet food safety requirements;
- ⦿ Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are to standard and meet the accessibility requirements of all members;
- ⦿ Fire precautions are in place;
- ⦿ First aid facilities and equipment are adequate;
- ⦿ There is access to a phone;
- ⦿ Equipment is checked regularly;
- ⦿ Insurance cover is adequate.

5.1.5 Accidents and incidents

The Society will ensure that:

- ⦿ Activities being undertaken are suitable for the abilities, ages and experience levels of the participants; vulnerable groups should not be excluded from any activities;
- ⦿ Equipment and facilities meet appropriate safety and quality standards and are appropriate to the needs of the participants;
- ⦿ Activities are risk assessed and that appropriate responses to identified risks are planned and implemented;
- ⦿ Where protective equipment is deemed necessary, it should be used;
- ⦿ Any injuries should be recorded with a note of the action taken. The Society maintains an accident/incident book with a specific incident form for completion by employees/volunteers. Due regard must be given to confidentiality. Parents/guardians will be notified by the appropriate person, of injuries/illnesses which might occur;
- ⦿ Insurance cover is adequate to the organisation's needs.

There are recording mechanisms in place to detail any accidents or incidents which may occur. In differentiating between the two it is useful to note that **an incident** does not usually involve any casualty or the loss of life, while **an accident** will involve some form of injury.

Incidents will be recorded separately from accidents as they may need to be referred to when considering suspected child abuse or neglect.

5.1.6 Safe supervision

Vulnerable groups are less likely to experience accidents or incidents if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised to maximise participation, fun and learning in a way that minimises risk.

The Society will ensure that:

- ⦿ A work schedule is displayed so that everyone knows who is on duty or volunteering in an activity;
- ⦿ Vulnerable groups are not left unattended;
- ⦿ Adequate numbers of employees/volunteers are available to supervise the activities (best practice would indicate that there are male and female employees/volunteers present to supervise coeducational activities);
- ⦿ Employees/volunteers know at all times where children, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection are and what they are doing;
- ⦿ Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant supervision by an employee/volunteer;
- ⦿ Dangerous behaviour is never allowed.

5.1.7 Code of Behaviour for participants

It is good practice to involve vulnerable groups participating in SVP activities in developing a Code of Behaviour for their own participation, where possible. A Code of Behaviour for participants helps to explain their rights and responsibilities, when taking part in SVP activities.

Should a child, young person or adult who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection display challenging or disruptive behaviour, it should be dealt with as follows:

- ⦿ More than one SVP employee or volunteer should be involved;
- ⦿ A record should be made describing what happened, the circumstances of the incident, who was involved, if any injury was sustained or property damaged and how the situation was resolved;
- ⦿ In some situations, for instance repeated patterns of behaviour, or where behaviour which poses a risk to a vulnerable participant or others, further measures may need to be taken and working in partnership with parents, guardians or carers is essential.

5.1.8 Ratios

Safe ratios of employees/volunteers to participants should be specified, taking account of the nature of the activity, age, level of ability of the participants and relevant policy, insurance or legislative requirements.

Where an activity or event consists of children of both sexes, both male and female supervision should be provided.

- ⦿ Children 0-4 years: minimum of two adults and a ratio 1:3;
- ⦿ Children 5-12 years: minimum of two leaders and a ratio 1:8;
- ⦿ Children 12 and above: minimum of two leaders and a ratio 1:10.

There should be one additional adult leader for every 10 extra children / young people.

Where an activity involves swimming and the children are under eight years of age then the ratio must be one adult to one child.

The ratio of workers to children with disabilities is dependent on the needs of the individual.

The ratio of children to adults on trips away and overnight stays must also be considered in the context of the needs of the children.

There are times when one-to-one work with children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection is appropriate and these instances are specified in the Code of Conduct for the relevant service within the Society. Any employee/volunteer undertaking one-to-one work with a child or vulnerable adult must adhere to the SVP Code of Conduct.

Where one-to-one work is used, it is safe practice to have agreements in place between SVP and the parents/carer regarding the reasons for the one-to-one work, the duration and the content of the sessions.

5.1.9 Use of Photography, Video and/or Social/Digital Media

Taking pictures and video footage and transmitting these to friends and family members has become a feature of everyday life. Social media sites are now commonly used to display images and videos and provide personal information.

Information and communication technology (ICT) forms an important platform for communication which is commonly used by adults and children/young people alike. It is important when working with vulnerable groups to ensure that the use of digital media and ICT is consensual, ethical and that it is not misused to cause harm to an individual.

The SVP Code of Conduct covers the use of digital media and ICT and sets out guidelines in respect of:

- ⦿ Consent for filming and photography and use of same;
- ⦿ Use of the organisation's information, including information about vulnerable groups, on social media sites;
- ⦿ Expectations around the conduct of staff and service users when using social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.;
- ⦿ Use of mobile phones, i.e. calling, photographing, filming, texting while in the service.

5.1.10 Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Safeguarding risk assessment is an important aspect of keeping vulnerable groups safe. The process examines aspects of an SVP service or activity from a safeguarding perspective to establish whether there are any practices or features that have the potential to put vulnerable groups at risk.

Risk assessment involves:

- ⦿ Identifying potential risks;
- ⦿ Ensuring policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk;
- ⦿ Constant evaluation and review to ensure adequate precautions are taken to minimise risk on a continuous basis.

Relevant Services as listed by the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) must conduct a risk assessment and display a Child Safeguarding Statement outlining policies and procedures in place to reduce risk of harm occurring to children using their services.

Special arrangements for risk assessment may exist in specialist services based on funding requirements and/or best practice – see local guidance.

5.2 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In SVP we may work in collaboration or partnership with another organisation such as:

- ⦿ Work on a one-off basis around a particular event, project or initiative;
- ⦿ Work on a medium to long term basis;
- ⦿ Accessing the services of employees/volunteers from another organisation;
- ⦿ Use or rental of non SVP premises.

It is important, that there is a clear understanding and agreement as to each organisation's guiding principles and safeguarding procedures. This may necessitate developing a protocol, agreed by the various parties, which will operate for the duration of the collaborative work. Everyone involved should be aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults and of any changes to their usual practice as a result of partnership working.

When working in partnership with another agency, there is a risk that employees /volunteers may

be confused about to whom they should report incidents or suspected protection or welfare concerns. There is also a risk of confusion about who is responsible for passing on such concerns to the Statutory Authorities. When using facilities or services provided by another organisation, or working in partnership, it is important to always follow SVP reporting procedures for protection or welfare concerns, in addition to any reporting protocol agreed with the other organisation/agency.

Where SVP collaborates and/or shares facilities with another organisation, it is essential that there is clarity on the reporting procedure to be followed in cases of incidents or suspected protection or welfare concerns. Always speak to the SVP DLP if you have any concerns.

5.3 MANAGING TRIPS AWAY

If the activities involve use of off-site facilities or staying away from home overnight, consideration should be paid to the following:

- ⦿ Safe methods of transport;
- ⦿ Adequate insurance to cover all aspects of the trip;
- ⦿ Written parental consent (for each individual trip);
- ⦿ Any information about the participants which may be relevant to staying away overnight, e.g. allergies, medical problems, special needs, etc.;
- ⦿ Number of employees/volunteers required to adequately supervise participants at all times;
- ⦿ Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements;
- ⦿ Respect for the privacy of children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

The following guidance is for employees/volunteers who are involved in organising residential/day trips away for children and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection.

5.3.1 Planning and documentation

- ⦿ Ensure consent forms are signed and received from parents/guardians, as appropriate, prior to departure;
- ⦿ Ensure that all necessary medical forms are filled out detailing medical conditions, allergies and/or procedures that may need to be looked after during the trip;
- ⦿ Ensure you have adequate insurance cover for the trips and activities involved;
- ⦿ The selection process for choosing the participants to come on the trip must be fair and transparent;
- ⦿ Follow proper recruitment procedures when selecting employees/volunteers to go on the trip, allowing enough time for police vetting and reference checks which may be outside the jurisdiction;
- ⦿ Ensure that all employees/volunteers have received adequate safeguarding training and are aware of the Society's guiding principles and safeguarding procedures;
- ⦿ Ensure that emergency contact phone numbers for parents/guardians and/or next of kin are documented and available at all times;
- ⦿ All employees/volunteers should be given clear roles and responsibilities for the trip;
- ⦿ There should be one person appointed as the overall leader of the group who will have final decision making authority during the trip;
- ⦿ Ensure that a risk assessment has been conducted in line with SVP policy.

5.3.2 Accommodation

- ⦿ In the planning stage check the proposed sleeping arrangements for participants, employees/volunteers and other support personnel;
- ⦿ Ensure separate sleeping areas for adult volunteers / employees and children, young people, vulnerable adults, adults at risk, or in need of protection. At no time should participants sleep in the same rooms as volunteers or employees;

- ⦿ Check health and safety issues relating to the accommodation such as emergency evacuation for upstairs rooms, accessibility of rooms and corridors for mobility of the participants;
- ⦿ Ensure that single-gender dormitories/rooms are used;
- ⦿ Ensure that only children/young people of similar age share sleeping accommodation;
- ⦿ Ensure all employees/volunteers have a list of all the participants' accommodation allocation;
- ⦿ Employees, volunteers and other adults at the venue should never enter participants' accommodation without knocking first.

5.3.3 Preparing participants and programme

- ⦿ Prepare an information pack for participants including the programme of activities, emergency information and contact details;
- ⦿ It is essential that the participants are involved in every aspect of the process, where appropriate and practical. It could be an ideal opportunity for them to share the responsibility for the trip/activities that take place;
- ⦿ A Code of Behaviour for the children, young people, vulnerable adults, adults at risk in need of protection, should be signed by the parents/guardians, as appropriate;
- ⦿ Ensure one employee/volunteer is appointed group leader; they will have various responsibilities including making a report following the trip;
- ⦿ There should be a plan for communication with parents/guardians, next of kin and participants to inform them of travel and accommodation details, activities, special requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. This can take the form of meetings or written correspondence.

5.3.4 Emergency procedures

- ⦿ Have clear emergency procedures should you need to curtail your trip; have an emergency fund and know where the participants, employees and volunteers are at all times;
- ⦿ Participants should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never go unsupervised without prior permission;
- ⦿ Have a back-up plan if the programme changes for any reason;
- ⦿ Bring a medical/first aid kit with you;
- ⦿ Employees/volunteers should ensure they have the contact details of senior management and the Designated Liaison Person with them while on the trip.

5.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

To put an effective monitoring and evaluation system in place, each of the following should be addressed:

- ⦿ Systems for monitoring and evaluation should be developed prior to the trip and agreed among the team;
- ⦿ Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out with the participants, employees and volunteers;
- ⦿ There should be daily evaluations with the participants, employees and volunteers;
- ⦿ Carry out a full and final evaluation which should be a real exercise to learn from;
- ⦿ Review the risk assessment from the planning process to see if there are any areas that need to be addressed;
- ⦿ Make sure there is a system for keeping records and reports during the trip.

6. SAFE MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

6.1 CODE OF CONDUCT

Having a Code of Conduct in place helps employees/members/volunteers to focus on supporting children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection in their everyday work. It also assists in trying to focus on the participants and their needs.

The Code of Conduct sets out the boundaries which employees, members and volunteers are expected to adhere to when working with children or adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection. It also clarifies how to communicate/work with participants in a way which respects their right to be listened to, treated with respect and treated fairly. The Code of Conduct limits the risk of abuse, misinterpretation or unintentional harm occurring.

SVP respects the rights, dignity and worth of every human being. We have a Code of Conduct for all employees, members and volunteers to achieve this. This Code outlines best practice in keeping vulnerable groups safe. It offers guidance for the best possible safety of children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection **AND** employees, members and volunteers. The Code is designed to remove any ambiguity and to give employees, members and volunteers greater confidence and freedom while carrying out their SVP work. Everybody acting on behalf of the Society must respect the rights, privacy and dignity of those whom we assist, themselves and all other employees, members and volunteers.

SVP values and respects the people we assist. We do this by listening to participants and involving them in decision making as appropriate and valuing their contribution. This is reflected in the person centred ethos of our organisation.

General Code of Conduct

- ⦿ Everybody acting on behalf of the Society – members, non-member volunteers, and employees will carry SVP ID which includes both name and photo. In situations where there is direct contact with the public, and it is considered suitable e.g holiday centres, hostels, crèches or youth clubs, members, non-member volunteers will wear name badges;
- ⦿ Physical punishment of children, young people adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection is not permissible under any circumstances;
- ⦿ Verbal abuse is not permissible under any circumstances;
- ⦿ Telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of vulnerable groups is never acceptable;
- ⦿ The Society carries out all volunteer work in pairs. Therefore there must be two members, non-member volunteers present for all interactions with vulnerable groups.

Should an exceptional emergency situation arise where it is necessary to be alone with a child, young person, adult who may be vulnerable, at risk, in need of protection the individual acting on behalf of The Society should give careful consideration as to the necessity of the interaction and to the safety of all involved. If it is absolutely imperative to continue another member, non-member volunteer should be informed of the situation immediately, by telephone if necessary. A written note outlining the situation and that the meeting took place, including the reasons for it, should be made and referred to the Conference President or Service Manager.

Occasionally it may be necessary to be alone with a child, young person, adult who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection in non-emergency situations e.g in assistance with personal care, or scheduled meetings only as per section 5.1.8 of this document.

A child, young person or vulnerable adult, adult at risk, or in need of protection should never be left in a dangerous or unsuitable position because there is no second person available.

Special arrangements may exist in specialist services – homeless services, children’s services, social housing and holiday centres – see local guidance.

- ⊙ Those acting on behalf of the Society must never take vulnerable groups to their own homes;
 - ⊙ Volunteers and employees should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with vulnerable groups. If in certain circumstances, only one adult is available, there should be a minimum of two children, young people or vulnerable adults present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey with a child, young person or adult who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection the person acting on behalf of SVP should inform another SVP representative in advance about the details of the journey, times etc., a record of this should be made and parents or guardians should be informed as soon as possible;
 - ⊙ Vulnerable groups should not work or remain in SVP properties unless there are at least two adults present;
 - ⊙ Vulnerable groups to be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable;
 - ⊙ People acting on behalf of the Society should not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be constructed as bullying or abusive;
 - ⊙ A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child, young person, adult who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection;
 - ⊙ Under no circumstances should people acting on behalf of the Society give alcohol, tobacco, or non-prescription drugs to vulnerable groups;
 - ⊙ Only age appropriate language, material on media products (camera phones, internet, and video) and activities should be used when working with vulnerable groups;
 - ⊙ It is important that if an employee/volunteer has a concern about the behaviour of another employee/volunteer that they report these concerns to the Designated Liaison Person. Where the concern relates to the DLP, reports should be made to another senior manager. For more on reporting see *“SVP recognising and reporting welfare and protection concerns about children”*;
 - ⊙ It is the responsibility of all members, non-member volunteers, and employees to report any breach of this code of conduct to the Conference, Area or Regional President or the Service Manager.
- The Society will:
- ⊙ Display the Code of Conduct in the place of activity;
 - ⊙ Ensure the Code of Conduct is communicated to employees, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and vulnerable adults;
 - ⊙ Make a copy available to parents, guardians, children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection and visitors;
 - ⊙ Ensure employees/volunteers are clear that the organisation’s expectations of their behaviour with vulnerable groups make them less vulnerable to erroneous allegations of abuse;
 - ⊙ Where appropriate get the children/vulnerable adults, adults at risk or in need of protection

involved in discussing and drawing up the Code of Conduct for employees and volunteers.

Breaches of the Code will not be tolerated, and may result in investigation, suspension, disciplinary action or termination of the volunteer's/employee's contract of engagement.

In addition:

- ⦿ Our Code of Conduct will be used as a tool in training to discuss and consider expectations of employees'/volunteers' conduct, including in induction training for all new employees/volunteers;
- ⦿ Our Code of Conduct can provide a useful tool in staff supervision. It provides an agreed language and framework to discuss practice issues that may arise in day-to-day work;
- ⦿ Managers have a responsibility to supervise and support employees/volunteers to ensure the Code is being adhered to;
- ⦿ Our Code of Conduct includes an explicit declaration about employees'/volunteers' responsibilities to report breaches of the Code to management. This should be emphasised in on-going training, induction and staff meetings;
- ⦿ Managers need to listen and respond appropriately to reports of breaches of the code;
- ⦿ Having developed and implemented the Code for employees and volunteers, the Society has clearly identified boundaries regarding acceptable and unacceptable practice. This makes it much easier to address issues of poor practice, should they arise. Disciplinary action will be taken where appropriate.

6.2 SUPERVISION

Management and supervision of employees and volunteers after appointment is equally important to keep vulnerable groups safe.

Supervision of employees/volunteers helps maintain best practice and safeguards those availing of our services.

All employees/volunteers should have regular reviews of their practice to ensure that they improve over time. Conducting an annual appraisal of work is also important to allow for the recognition of good work and to help to develop skills further; this should be a formal, recorded process.

Functions of Supervision:

Supervision provides a regular, structured opportunity to discuss work, review practice and progress and plan for future development.

The main functions of supervision are:

- ⦿ Management to hold the employee/volunteer accountable for practice to ensure safe, quality, care for children, vulnerable adults and families;
- ⦿ Support for the individual employee/volunteer in what may be a demanding and potentially stressful working environment. This may involve debriefing which addresses the emotional impact of such work;
- ⦿ Learning and development of each individual to identify their knowledge base, attitude, learning style and skills; to identify learning needs and the strengths and weaknesses of the employee/volunteer; and to plan and set targets for on-going development;
- ⦿ Mediation to ensure healthy engagement with, and communication between, the individual and the organisation.

The Society also carries out a review at the end of a probationary period. At this review a manager will check that the employee/volunteer understands the guiding principles and safeguarding procedures.

The Society also conducts an annual review or staff appraisal; the purpose of this is to assess general performance and it also gives an opportunity to review any changes in the personal circumstances of employees, e.g. whether they have acquired criminal convictions or otherwise. In SVP, the responsibility for providing supervision lies with the Conference President and / or Project Manager. It should be provided on a regular

basis. Supervision of all those who carry out the work of SVP is an essential part of ensuring the welfare of vulnerable groups. Supervision involves arranging to see members and employees at regular intervals, whether on their own or in small groups. Supervision will include the opportunity to provide feedback and support. This will involve arranging to observe those working with vulnerable groups at regular intervals, on their own or in small groups, and giving all who act on behalf of the Society the opportunity to raise any questions they may have, to highlight any problems they are experiencing or to present any suggestions for change that they may wish to make. Supervision also allows managers to assess the need for change in policies or practice, or for additional training. It is important that supervision procedures include the opportunity to identify and address sources of anxiety or stress for individuals, and for members and employees to raise any concerns they may have regarding a child, young person or adult who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection.

6.3 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Disciplinary procedures are essential in the overall response to a failure by an employee /volunteer to meet the expected standard of work or behaviour in their working practice.

Disciplinary procedures are written, step-by-step procedures which SVP commits itself to follow in every case where an employee/volunteer may have to be warned, reprimanded, or dismissed as a result of a complaint or failure on the worker's part to meet the expected standards.

Disciplinary procedures may be instituted when:

- ⊙ There is a complaint made about a worker or volunteer;
- ⊙ There is an alleged breach of the code of conduct;
- ⊙ There is an allegation of abuse made against a worker or volunteer.

The disciplinary procedures work alongside and are consistent with our complaints procedures, Code of Conduct and procedure for managing allegations of abuse against workers/volunteers (for more details see *"SVP recognising and reporting welfare and protection concerns about children, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection"*).

When dealing with employees, procedures must comply with employment law. When dealing with volunteers, in the absence of employment law, procedures must adhere to the principles of natural justice, good practice and should not unfairly discriminate against the volunteer.

Any person subject to disciplinary procedures is entitled under fair procedure to:

- ⊙ Have clear information in respect of the complaint;
- ⊙ Copies of any documentation used in decision making;
- ⊙ An opportunity to provide their account and for this to be considered before any conclusions are drawn;
- ⊙ Have conclusions and decisions set out in writing;
- ⊙ A right of appeal.

Appeals against disciplinary action

If the employee/volunteer feels that the disciplinary action taken against them is wrong or unjust they have the right to appeal against the decision. An appeals procedure is developed as part of the disciplinary procedure.

7. SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT SAFEGUARDING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS

Working in partnership with parents/guardians and families involves information sharing and consultation regarding all aspects of participation in our service. Meaningful communication is essential in building a partnership with parents/guardians and families.

Good communication depends not only on how information is shared but what is being shared. Organisations can support vulnerable groups rights by ensuring that they and –where appropriate - their parents/guardians are kept informed of matters that concern them.

7.1 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Sharing our guiding principles and safeguarding procedures

Vulnerable groups and where appropriate their parents/guardians should be made aware of our guiding principles and safeguarding procedures on initial contact with our service. When communicating with parents/guardians, families, children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection the Society endeavours to be mindful of possible literacy issues, language barriers and communication differences.

Best practice in communications

Participation is important for vulnerable groups and parents/ guardians because it gives them an opportunity to have a say about issues and decisions that affect them, learn new skills, have fun and develop links with their community.

The Society endeavours to promote the rights of vulnerable groups to be consulted and to have their views and opinions taken into account when decisions are being made which affect them.

Some of the ways in which we share information with vulnerable groups, and their parents/guardians include:

Display:

- ⦿ Our communications strategy;
- ⦿ The name of the Designated Liaison Person;
- ⦿ Our calendar detailing activities, events, etc;
- ⦿ Details of any information evenings/ workshops for parents/guardians.

Information:

Have a parents'/guardians' handbook /leaflets / newsletters communicating:

- ⦿ How to make a protection or welfare report relating to children, young people or adults, who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection;
- ⦿ How to make a complaint;
- ⦿ The SVP declaration of guiding principles and that of any organisation we work alongside;
- ⦿ The Code of Conduct for employees and volunteers, as well as the one for participants;
- ⦿ Participants' right to be protected, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration.

Ask:

- ⦿ Gather appropriate information and be mindful of confidentiality;
- ⦿ Registration forms for vulnerable groups should evidence that parents/guardians have been informed of our Safeguarding Statement and/or guiding principles;

- ⦿ It is important to establish who has guardianship rights for vulnerable groups attending SVP services. Where guardianship issues arise, documentation from legal guardians should be requested and kept on the participants file evidencing who the legal guardians are;
- ⦿ Regularly check in with parents/guardians that the information you are sharing is being received and understood. Ask parents/guardians and participants for feedback to find out what we are doing well and what we could improve or change to benefit parents/guardians and vulnerable groups using our service.

Communicating with vulnerable groups about staying safe:

- ⦿ Give vulnerable groups a voice so that they can convey any concerns they might have;
- ⦿ Regularly check in with vulnerable groups that the information you are sharing is being received and understood;
- ⦿ You should have something that is clearly displayed for vulnerable groups that signposts information on safeguarding;
- ⦿ Check vulnerable groups understand that they are free to approach any employee/volunteer if they are worried about something.

7.2 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS, AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Working in partnership with parents/guardians and families helps to safeguard vulnerable groups.

Forming positive relationships encourages mutual trust and reassures them that the organisation sees their welfare as paramount.

It is important to be aware of the family and support structures and endeavour to involve all family members who play a key role in the person's life. This may include mothers, fathers, grandparents, foster carers, etc.

In order for a parent/guardian/family member to believe that they can work in partnership with professionals they need to feel respected and valued.

One of the ways this can be done is to assure them that, whenever appropriate, they will be consulted/spoken with when a concern arises before information is passed on to another agency about a concern.

If you feel that you might put the child, adult who may be vulnerable, at risk, or in need of protection at risk of further harm by informing the parents/guardians or carers that a report is going to be made, you should discuss this concern with the DLP and Statutory Authorities prior to talking to the parents/guardian.

Discussing an issue with parents/guardians helps them to better understand the issue and gives them an opportunity to respond.

Best practice in working in partnership and communicating involves:

- ⦿ Providing visual information on who works in your organisation e.g. a photograph of each employee/volunteer;
- ⦿ Having something that is clearly visible for parents/guardians that signposts information on safeguarding vulnerable groups. Your statement of guiding principles and /or your Child Safeguarding Statement should be displayed;
- ⦿ Talking to parents/guardians informally on a regular basis;
- ⦿ Providing information in a format and language that can be easily understood by everyone, including children/vulnerable adults, e.g. a leaflet with the main points of your declaration of guiding principles outlined in brief, newsletters, parents/guardian's handbook, etc. These should be translated to other languages where appropriate;
- ⦿ Having an open door policy, which allows parents/guardians to visit the service at any time;

- ⦿ Regularly providing information and feedback to parents/guardians verbally as well as in writing.

We will encourage parents/guardians to:

- ⦿ Ask about our organisation's guiding principles and safeguarding procedures;
- ⦿ Make suggestions/comments;
- ⦿ Be involved with and part of the management committee;
- ⦿ Look around the environment;
- ⦿ Ask about the participants experience of the employees/volunteers/service/programme/activity/group and how they are getting on;
- ⦿ Talk with employees/volunteers about how the participant is getting on in the service;
- ⦿ Share information about their culture and traditions;
- ⦿ Attend any information meetings/workshops for parents/guardians.

7.3 EMPOWERING PARTICIPANTS TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS

As an organisation, SVP endeavours to empower participants and clients in our services by making them aware of their rights. In particular, we encourage the active participation of children and vulnerable adults in all decision making relevant to their involvement in the service/activities, in a manner which is appropriate to their age, ability and developmental stage.

To create a safer environment for children and vulnerable adults, the Society also promotes a culture amongst employees and volunteers which enables and supports children/vulnerable adults – and/or their families where appropriate - to exercise their right to speak out when they feel they are suffering harm or are at risk of suffering harm.

We believe that when children and vulnerable adults feel included in decision making, respected and valued by employees and

volunteers, they are much more likely to speak up about any abuse they might be experiencing. Enabling and promoting the participation of children and vulnerable adults within SVP has many benefits, including:

- ⦿ Providing the opportunity to check that what we are doing is actually what children/vulnerable adults want and need;
- ⦿ Demonstrating our commitment to upholding the rights of children and vulnerable adults;
- ⦿ Strengthening our commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in our organisation;
- ⦿ Building leadership skills of children and vulnerable adults;
- ⦿ Enhancing the safety of children/vulnerable adults by identifying risks and dangers.

We will:

- ⦿ Educate children and vulnerable adults on their right to be safe from abuse and neglect through, for example, discussion sessions, leaflets and posters. This can help them to be active in their own protection;
- ⦿ Make sure children and vulnerable adults know who to speak to if they feel unsafe or unhappy about something;
- ⦿ Consider how to involve children and vulnerable adults and support their participation;
- ⦿ Train employees/volunteers in how to effectively listen to and communicate with children and vulnerable adults;
- ⦿ Feedback forms may be used to gain views on when participants feel safe/unsafe, happy/unhappy and included/not included;

- ⦿ Participants will be supported to develop their own Code of Conduct that includes expectations for their interactions with other participants, employees and volunteers and has guidance about anti-bullying. This will be displayed within the service;
- ⦿ Include a child or vulnerable adult on an interview panel where appropriate and possible, and ask them to assist in forming interview questions;
- ⦿ Openly discuss guiding principles and safeguarding procedures with children and vulnerable adults using the service;
- ⦿ Encourage children and vulnerable adults to speak out and make complaints.

7.4 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Part of empowering children, young people adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection is making sure that they are protected from bullying behaviour while attending activities and services in SVP.

“Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the Internet and other personal devices.”

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in SVP. If bullying does occur, vulnerable groups should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the leader / person in charge.

Bullying can be:

- ⦿ Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures);
- ⦿ Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- ⦿ Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- ⦿ Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- ⦿ Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality;
- ⦿ Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
- ⦿ Cyber - all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse; mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls; misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

SVP have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying:

- ⦿ Report bullying incidents to leader/ person in charge;
- ⦿ The incidents will be recorded by leader/ person in charge;
- ⦿ In serious cases parents/carers will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem;
- ⦿ If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted;
- ⦿ The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly;
- ⦿ An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) to change their behaviour;

-
- ⦿ The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place;
 - ⦿ In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered;
 - ⦿ If possible, the children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection will be reconciled;
 - ⦿ After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

8. COMMUNICATION, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

8.1 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF SVP'S PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

SVP is committed to ongoing monitoring of these principles and procedures through the following processes:

- ⊙ The Safeguarding Manager will review the content in line with any relevant policy and legislative developments;
- ⊙ The Safeguarding Manager will review the content in line with advice, guidance or training received;
- ⊙ The National Safeguarding Committee will conduct an annual quality assurance process and report to National Management Council.

Purpose of Safeguarding Quality Assurance Process

- ⊙ To ensure the safety and welfare of vulnerable groups;
- ⊙ To support and resource members/ employees;
- ⊙ To ensure compliance with legislation and guidance;
- ⊙ To reassure NMC as trustees of SVP;
- ⊙ To maintain good reputation of and trust in SVP.

Methodology

- ⊙ Conference self-evaluation questionnaire;
- ⊙ Service self-evaluation questionnaire;
- ⊙ Safeguarding quality circle per Region, area of special work – facilitated by Safeguarding Reps / Special Work;
- ⊙ Statistics regarding Designated Liaison Person reports;
- ⊙ Review of safeguarding serious incidents;
- ⊙ Option for unannounced visit as required;
- ⊙ Feedback from vulnerable groups – children, young people, adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection.

8.2 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Things can go wrong and do go wrong in any service organisation. The appropriate handling of complaints is an integral part of good governance and risk management. Complaints procedures provide an opportunity to put things right for service users and their families. They also are a useful additional means of monitoring the quality of service provision. Complaints are best dealt with through local resolution where the emphasis should be on achieving quick and effective resolutions to the satisfaction of all concerned. Vulnerable persons may need particular support to use a complaints procedure.

Complaints should be dealt with in a positive manner, lessons should be learned and changes made to systems or procedures where this is

considered necessary. Particular attention should be paid to complaints which are suggestive of abusive or neglectful practices or which indicate a degree of vulnerability. All cases of alleged or suspected abuse must be taken seriously. All employees/volunteers must inform their DLP/ Line Manager immediately. All services must have effective mechanisms in place to ensure a prompt response to concerns and complaints. Ensuring the safety and well-being of the vulnerable person is the priority consideration.

SVP has developed policy and procedures for responding to complaints – see SVP policy and procedure for responding to complaints (2010).

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

SVP Recognising and Reporting Welfare and Protection Concerns about Children or Vulnerable Adults who may be Vulnerable (ROI) 2017

SVP Recognising and Reporting Welfare and Protection Concerns about Children or Adults at Risk or in Need of Protection (NI) 2017

SVP Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Complaints 2014



Society of St Vincent de Paul

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul,
National Office, SVP House,
91-92 Sean MacDermott Street,
Dublin 1, Ireland
D01 WV38
Phone: +353 1 884 8200
Email: info@svp.ie