



Child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policy

Date Policy approved: 21.03.2026

Next review Date: 30.03.2027

Introduction

An Iorua – Irish cultural centre is a young non-profit organisation. It is Scandinavia's first Irish cultural centre, and we are organising a wide array of events spanning the width of Irish culture from music and dance, literature, cultural heritage to community projects.

The cultural centre's main purpose is to promote Irish culture and community in Norway, as well as cultural exchanges between Ireland and Norway. It will be a cultural resource to Irish expats in Norway, as well as for anyone interested in Irish culture.

Our aim is to considerably increase the number of Irish related events and activities in Norway. We have high artistic ambitions for the professional part of our activities and aim to be a solid, high-quality arena for Irish culture, as well as a home for all those who share a love, interest or just curiosity for Irish culture.

As far as possible, the centre should be a physical place, but we can, and will, organise events and activities regardless of whether we have our own premises or not. We still do not have our own space.

Our activities shall be open and inclusive – regardless of people's age, background and nationality.

An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre is dedicated to protecting all children and vulnerable adults in accordance with national laws and applicable local and national guidelines.

We will ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults by delivering our activities in a way that prioritizes their well-being.

An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre is devoted to fostering a culture where harm to children and vulnerable adults is completely unacceptable. This involves identifying situations that may heighten risk; understanding the signs of abuse, exploitation, or neglect; and being ready to report any safeguarding concerns.

This commitment applies to recognizing and reporting harm experienced in any setting, including our own activities, other community or volunteer programs, in public spaces and at home.

An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre is committed to maintaining the highest safeguarding standards and ensuring that all people have the right to live free from abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Purpose

The child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policy demonstrates An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre's commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. This child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policy is a document that outlines:

- The precautions we take to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- How children and vulnerable adults can be safeguarded from abuse.
- Whom to report to within the institution if abuse occurs.
- How to appropriately respond to a given situation.

Child and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding means protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse, as well as identifying and stopping abuse that is already happening.

We, An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre must do everything we can to prevent abuse cases, but this does not mean that no abuse will occur in the future. When working with people, there is always a risk that we may unintentionally hurt others, behave inappropriately, or that some form of abuse may occur among children and vulnerable adults. We must live with this reality, but that's why we must do everything possible to minimize the risk factors. It's also important to be aware that within an organization, many people are not child and vulnerable adult protection experts and may not always know what the best course of action is for the child, vulnerable adult or the community. Therefore, it is crucial to understand our own limits and abilities – what we can and should do, and to whom we need to report in case of abuse.

An important part of the guidelines is the code of conduct, which describes how to behave when working directly with children and vulnerable adults. (Annex 1)

Policy statements

The aim of this policy is to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, by minimizing the risks of harm and abuse. It ensures that An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre's activities are carried out in a secure and protective environment to the greatest extent possible and that any incidents of abuse or harm are addressed promptly and effectively.

The child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policy is not just a document, and it's unrealistic to expect that everyone will immediately understand their responsibilities related to child and vulnerable adult protection. It takes time for every member of an organization to be aware of what children and vulnerable adults safety means and how the organization can guarantee it with the right tools.

"Who is the policy designed to protect?"

- A child is anyone who has not reached his/her 18th birthday.
- A vulnerable adult is a person other than a child who is suffering from a disability, impairment or disorder which is of such a nature or degree as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard themselves against harm by another person or that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living.

In this regard, we are responsible for:

- The children and vulnerable adults who attend our events and activities.
- Generally, for children and vulnerable adults – we have an obligation to act in any case we become aware of – for example, if a child or and vulnerable adults attending our events shares that their classmate is being abused by their parents at home.

Definitions

It's important for everyone at An Iorua – Irish Cultural Centre to be aware of the signs and symptoms of harm and abuse. These signs may not always be immediately apparent or clear, but the more staff and volunteers are informed about potential warning signs, the better they will be at identifying abuse and taking appropriate action.

Physical abuse is when a child or vulnerable adult is harmed or could be harmed by actions or a lack of actions, and the person responsible could have prevented it. This can include hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, drowning, or suffocating.

Signs of physical abuse:

- Bruises, black eyes, welts, lacerations, and rope marks.
- Unlikely explanation for injuries.
- Mistrust towards adults.
- Sudden change in behavior (aggression, withdrawal).
- Difficulty breathing, vomiting, extreme drowsiness, dizziness.
- Child's or vulnerable adult's report of being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated.
- Child's or vulnerable adult's sudden change in behaviour.

Emotional abuse is when a child or vulnerable adult is repeatedly treated in a way that harms their emotional well-being and development. This could involve making the child or vulnerable adult feel worthless, unloved, or like they only exist to meet someone else's needs, or giving them expectations they can't meet. It includes actions like threatening, scaring, humiliating, bullying or ignoring the child or vulnerable adult.

Signs of emotional abuse:

- Sudden change in behavior.
- Abrupt mood swings, eating and sleeping disorders.
- Suicidal thoughts, increased anxiety, emotional and/or social isolation.
- Lack of self-soothing ability, emotional regulation difficulties, lack of confidence, lack of long-term relationships.
- Excessive friendliness with strangers.

- Isolation from parents.
- Nervousness around certain people.
- Child's or vulnerable adult's report of being verbally or mentally mistreated.

Sexual abuse happens when an adult or older child in a position of trust or power forces or tricks a child or vulnerable adult into taking part in sexual activities. This may include physical contact or encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave inappropriately. It also includes showing children or vulnerable adults pornography or encouraging them to engage in sexual behavior.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- Avoidance of certain people or places, especially those associated with the abuse.
- Sexualized behavior, including acting out sexual acts inappropriately for their age.
- Difficulty sleeping or having nightmares.
- Withdrawal from social activities or relationships with peers and family members.
- Sudden changes in eating habits, leading to weight loss or gain.
- Extreme mood swings, depression, or anxiety.
- Unexplained feelings of guilt, shame, or self-blame.
- Low self-esteem or a sense of worthlessness.
- Fear or distrust of adults or particular people.
- Difficulty with schoolwork or concentration.
- Difficulty trusting others or forming healthy relationships.
- Self-destructive behaviors, including substance abuse, eating disorders, or risky behavior.
- Sudden or unexplained changes in appearance, such as neglecting personal hygiene.
- Child's or vulnerable adult's report of being sexually assaulted or raped.

Neglect is when a caregiver fails to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic needs, such as for health, education, nutrition, shelter, emotional development, or safety, leading to harm or potential harm to the child's or vulnerable adult's well-being. This also includes failing to supervise or protect children or vulnerable adults from harm as much as possible.

Signs of neglect:

- Frequent hunger.
- Food theft.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Constant fatigue.
- Untreated health issues.
- Untreated learning deficiencies.
- Delayed psychological development.

Bullying is when someone tries to hurt, intimidate, or control someone who is seen as weaker or more vulnerable. Bullying can include verbal abuse (name-calling), physical abuse (hitting or pushing), emotional abuse (making threats or excluding the child), and online bullying (sending hurtful messages, sharing embarrassing images, or bullying through social media or online games).

Signs of bullying:

- No clear answers to visible injuries.
- The child's or vulnerable adult's belongings are regularly damaged or disappear, and there are no clear explanations for this.
- Sudden change in behavior.
- Frequent psychosomatic symptoms.
- Anxiety symptoms (tics, compulsions).
- Sleep and eating problems, nightmares.
- Avoid social interactions.
- Arrive home late, usually by a different route

Who is responsible for what

Every staff member should:

- Understand and sign the Code of Conduct (Annex 1) and other documents related to their work.
- Follow the “Guide to the process of reporting” figure (listed below); in the case of abuse, or suspicion of abuse or violation of children's or vulnerable adults' rights, act in accordance with the guidelines:
 - Assist children or vulnerable adults in handling the situation and help them approach the appropriate adult for assistance.
 - If any suspicion of abuse is noticed, report it to the child and vulnerable adult safeguarding focal point, Cecilie Stensrud and Brendan Monaghan, for clarification.
 - Cooperate with the children or vulnerable adults, their relatives, colleagues, and other professionals in handling the case.
 - Treat information regarding the children or vulnerable adults confidentially and only share it with the necessary individuals.
 - Properly document the cases.

Child and vulnerable adult safeguarding focal point:

The Safeguarding Focal Point is a designated team at An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre, who is responsible for leading and coordinating efforts to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

The Safeguarding Focal Point receives all reports of safeguarding concerns about An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre staff or other contracted individuals or suppliers and anyone associated with An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre. People don't need to be certain before they speak up. If anyone is ever worried about someone, they should always speak to the Safeguarding Focal Point.

Anyone can approach the child safeguarding focal point with concerns related to the protection of children or vulnerable adults. Additionally, they play a key role in handling specific cases and situations: they receive reports and then coordinate the response, involving the appropriate adults to assist in managing the specific cases. In case of questions, provides information and guidance to both children and adults.

Regarding a specific case:

- Listens to and takes seriously any information or reports related to children or vulnerable adults, which may come from anyone, in any form.
- Provides feedback to the person who raised any suspicions or concerns.
- Maintains contact with and informs the affected children or vulnerable adults.
- Conducts a risk assessment and within their area of competence, ensures the safety of the affected child or vulnerable adult while managing the case.
- Reviews the information/report received and, if necessary, gathers additional information to understand and manage the situation.
- If necessary, organize a meeting with colleagues.
- Provides factual information to staff regarding specific cases, keeping the children's or vulnerable adults' best interests in mind.
- If justified, will:
 - Inform the legal guardian,
 - Inform the leadership,
 - Assess whether the guidelines or other organizational documents need to be updated, and whether additional training for children and staff is necessary to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Recognise, respond and report

If a safeguarding case comes to your attention (whether you saw, heard, or just suspect it), do the following:

- Always ensure the person raising the issue feels heard and supported.
- Avoid promising confidentiality. Follow An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre's policies and procedures to share information only with those who need to know and have the authority to receive it.
- Seek their consent to share the information. If they refuse, and you believe there is still a risk of harm to them or others, you must share the information with Cecilie Stensrud and/or Brendan Monaghan, even without consent.
- Report any concerns to Cecilie Stensrud and/or Brendan Monaghan, so they can determine the appropriate next steps.
- Record a clear and accurate account of what you've been told, seen, or heard.
- If you receive information about a concern, don't go directly to the person involved. Instead, speak with Cecilie Stensrud and/or Brendan Monaghan first.

Speaking up

- We all have a responsibility to speak up for those who can't speak for themselves.
- Reporting concerns about someone hurting or abusing a child or vulnerable adult is always the right thing to do.
- It's not the same as 'snitching' or 'being a tattletale'.

- People often worry that reporting someone will cause harm to the children or vulnerable adults, but not speaking up could lead to even more harm to others. The report will be directed to the Safeguarding Focal Point first, not to the official authorities at this stage. The Safeguarding Focal Point will decide on the next steps, considering the child's best interest.
- It's understandable to feel uneasy or scared about reporting suspected abuse, but overcoming those fears is crucial to helping someone in need.
- If you choose to speak up, An Iroua – Irish Cultural Centre will support and protect you, ensuring you're not harmed or criticized for doing the right thing.

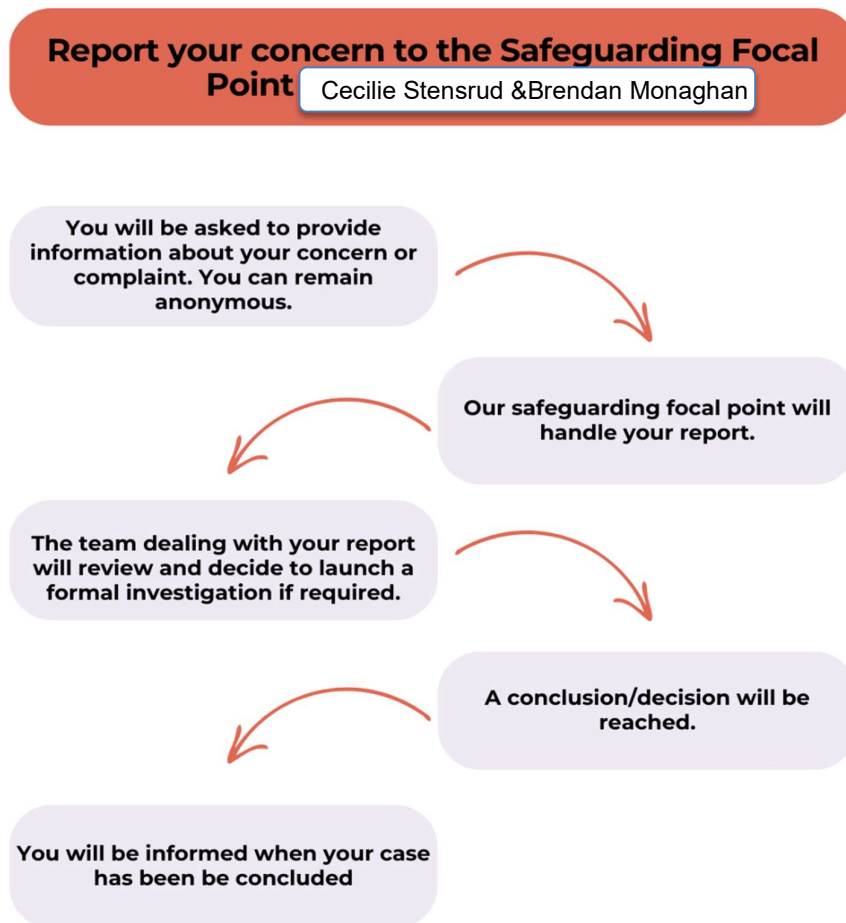
Main steps in the reporting process

Everyone has a responsibility to act if they witness abuse, receive information about abuse, or have concern or suspicion about possible abuse or inappropriate care.

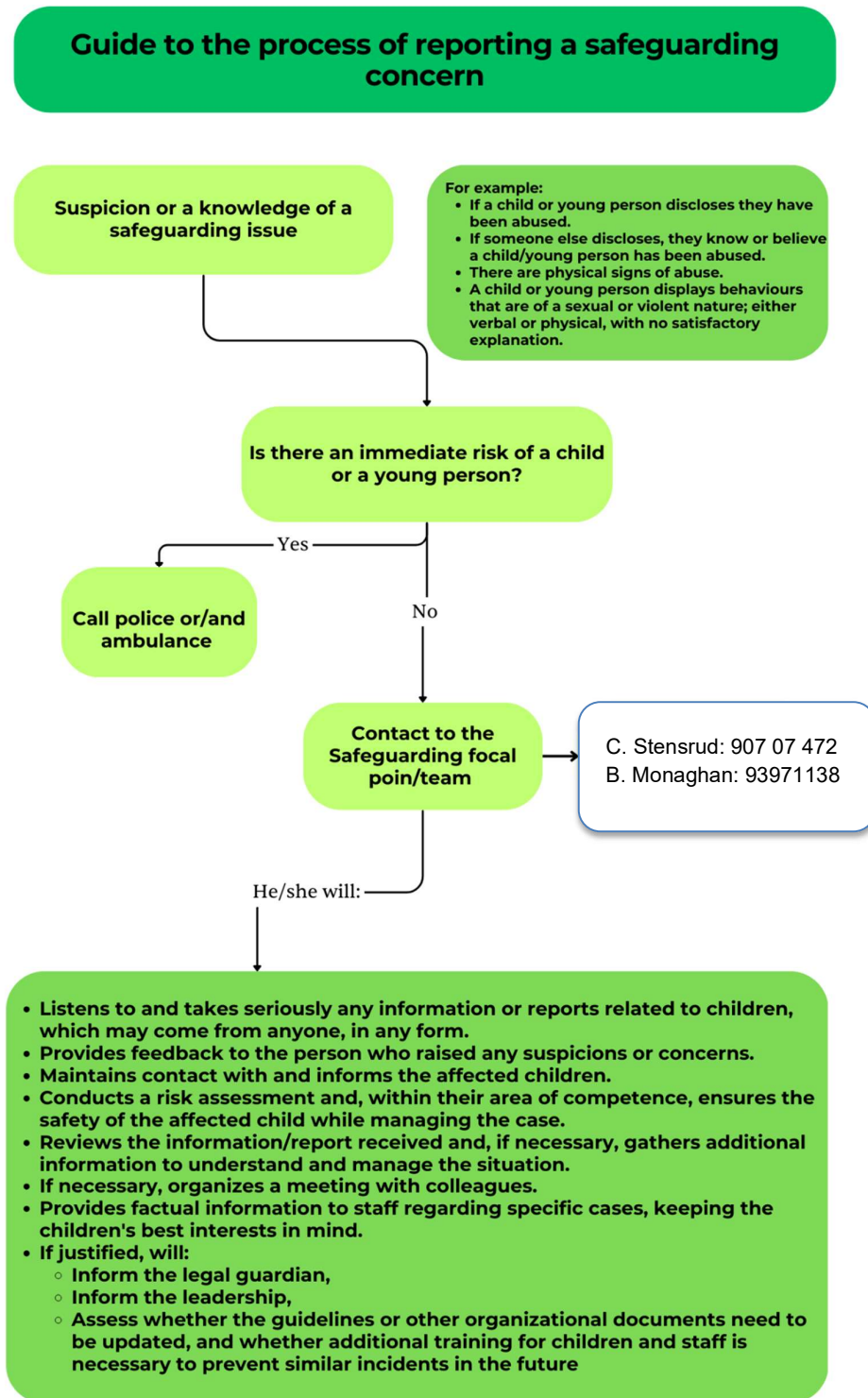
If a child tells you something:

- **Listen:**
 - Give the child or vulnerable adult your full attention, reassure, but don't make promises that you will not tell anyone.
 - Listen to the facts and not ask leading questions. listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute.
 - Use these words: tell me about ..., explain me ..., describe me ...
 - Clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions, explain to the child or vulnerable adult (if present) that other people may need to be told, in order to stop what is happening.
 - Keep information confidential – only those people who must know should be informed of the disclosure.
- **Share:** speak to the designated Safeguarding Focal Point. If the child or vulnerable adult shows or sends you a picture or video that makes them or another child or vulnerable adult look humiliated or vulnerable, don't share it online with the Safeguarding Focal Point, just show it. Sending an indecent picture of a child is a criminal offence no matter the intentions.

The following figure shows what will happen when reporting:



The following figure shows the internal reporting system of our organisation:



What principles do we follow when handling a case?

- We take every report seriously!
- If we “only” suspect abuse but are not completely sure, we still take action!
- In cases related to abuse, we act immediately!
- We always prioritize the safety and well-being of the affected children or vulnerable adults!
- We make it clear to the affected children or vulnerable adults when, what, and why things will happen!
- We cooperate with the professionals and other adults involved in case management!

Not taking appropriate action quickly can also affect the child's or vulnerable adult's mental health. They may feel despairing and hopeless and wonder why no-one is helping them. This may discourage them from seeking help in the future and make them distrust adults.

Introduction and review of this guideline

- This guideline is elaborated by An Iorua – Irish Cultural Centre's board.
- It will be published on An Iorua – Irish Cultural Centre's website.
- The board of An Iorua – Irish Cultural Centre will evaluate and, if necessary, amend this guideline yearly.

Sources of Information and Support

For help and support, see also The Norwegian Child Welfare Services
<https://www.bufdir.no/en/child-welfare-services/>

Approved by:



Limerick 13 April 2026

Cecilie Stensrud
Chair



Limerick 13 April 2026

Brendan Monaghan
Board member

Annex 1:

Code of conduct

The Code of Conduct regulates behaviours and attitudes that are expected, recommended and those that are prohibited.

Always

- I respect children's and vulnerable adults' rights, backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs.
- It's my responsibility to show appropriate behavior at all times.
- I aim to support the well-being of children and vulnerable adults and always prioritize their best interests with my actions and words.
- I consider the children's and vulnerable adults' opinions when making decisions that affect them, based on their age and maturity.
- I follow the guidelines and take every report or suspicion of abuse seriously, following the correct procedures for handling such cases.
- I respect the children's and vulnerable adults' privacy and do not share personal information about them.
- Whenever possible, I avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult, unless it's necessary for my role or in the child's or vulnerable adult's best interest.

Never

- I will never use corporal punishment. I have a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of violence or mistreatment. For example, I will not hit, shake, lock children or vulnerable adults up, pull on their clothes, or squeeze them.
- I will never provoke, harass, or embarrass a child or vulnerable adult. I will not humiliate or violate their rights or undermine their self-confidence. For example, I will not send hurtful online messages, humiliate them publicly, or make offensive remarks.
- I will not use language or behavior that could intimidate, embarrass, or humiliate a child or vulnerable adult.
- I will avoid inappropriate physical contact with children or vulnerable adults. For example, I will not make sexual references, tell sexual jokes, flirt with them, or give inappropriate compliments. I will only touch a child or vulnerable adult when it's necessary for their well-being and done in a way that respects their boundaries.
- I will never engage in sexual relations with any child, young adult, or vulnerable adult or their family members associated with the care facility. For example, I will not approach them sexually and will reject any such advances.
- I will not initiate or allow sexually inappropriate games with children or vulnerable adults. For example, I will not play games that involve intimate touches or put children or vulnerable adults in vulnerable situations.
- I will never show or share pornographic material with children or vulnerable adults. For example: I will not send naked photos of myself or others, watch pornographic videos in their presence, or provide "tips" about pornographic websites.
- I will not engage in or encourage any illegal, harmful, or dangerous activities with children or vulnerable adults. For example, I will not steal from them, offer them drugs, or ask them to take part in any illegal acts.
- I will treat all children and vulnerable adults equally and without discrimination. I will accept every child and vulnerable adult as they are and handle their matters impartially. For example, I will never make negative comments about a child's or vulnerable adult's background, disability, or any other characteristic. I will ensure that every child and

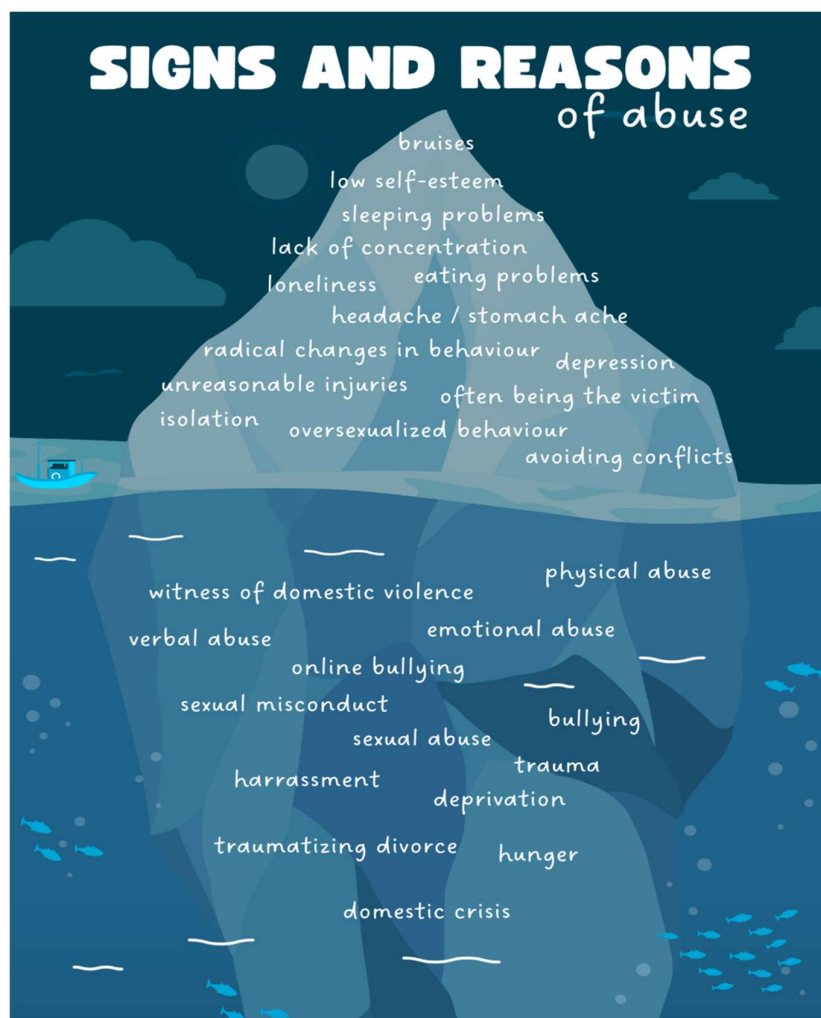
vulnerable adult has the chance to participate in activities they're interested in – for instance, if a child or vulnerable adult needs extra time to complete a task, I will allow it.

- I will not take pictures, videos, or recordings of children or vulnerable adults for personal use. For example, I will not take pictures of them to show friends or for my own inappropriate purposes.
- I will not share any images, videos, or recordings of a child or vulnerable adult on any platform where they can be identified without the consent of the leadership, the child or vulnerable adult and their legal guardian. I will not publish any content that could harm the child or vulnerable adult, even if no one is identifiable.

Acknowledgment

I, _____, confirm that I have received, read, and understood An Iorua – Irish Cultural Centre's Child Safeguarding Policy, and Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

I commit to following the standards and behaviors outlined in the Code of Conduct.



Annex 2:

The basics of appropriate behavior with children

Always 	Never 
● Setting a good example; ● Using non-violent and positive behavior methods; ● Positive, respectful, and safety-ensuring behavior; ● Handling the child's admiration appropriately, while considering their feelings; ● Being prepared to properly handle situations with a high risk of abuse (personal and family circumstances, lifestyle habits, external programs, taking photos and videos, etc.); ● Promoting the children's self-defense and advocacy skills.	● Challenging behavior; ● All forms of abuse; ● Inappropriate or discriminatory language and behavior; ● Sharing excessive personal information; ● Crossing professional boundaries; ● Using sexualized or inappropriate language (even in the form of jokes)