

# Child Safeguarding Statement

This Child Safeguarding Statement is prepared in accordance with the Children First Act 2015, and the Children First: National Guidance. It sets out the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child interacting with Dublin Zoo is safe from harm.

## 1. NAME OF SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

Dublin Zoo is Ireland’s largest fee-paying family attraction set in 28 hectares of the Phoenix Park. The non-profit organisation provides a site for recreation and education to families throughout Ireland and to foreign visitors. Visitation to the site exceeds 1.2 million visitors annually. The organisation is dedicated to education, conservation and research.

Under the Children First Act, 2015, Dublin Zoo is a relevant service as it undertakes:

*“Any work or activity which consists of the provision of:*

*(a) educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children”*

The Discovery and Learning Team, Events Team and Zoo Keepers provide formal and informal education through organised classes, events and through public engagement activities. These teams have a variety of contact with children and the general public.

Activities include:

- Pre-school, primary and secondary level formal education programmes delivered by trained teaching staff in various venues throughout the site.
- Parent and Toddler sessions, weekend workshops, day camps and weeklong summer camps delivered by trained teachers and supported by volunteers in various venues throughout the site.
- Public engagement events delivered by volunteers via tours, workshops and facilitated site-wide information stations and in the Discovery Centre.
- Keeper talks delivered to the public and to private groups at various locations around the site.
- Private family events which include birthday party hosting in Camp Congo and Camp Kaziranga, Santa’s Grotto hosted in The Farmhouse and weddings, communions, overnight family events etc. hosted in Haughton House.
- The Dream Night event.
- Children, family and schools online/virtual workshops and lectures delivered virtually by the Discovery and Learning Team.

## 2. PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

Dublin Zoo:

- Is committed to safeguarding the children on the site by providing a safe environment in which they can visit, learn and play.
- Believes that the welfare of children attending Dublin Zoo is paramount. We are committed to child-centred practice in all our work with children.
- Is committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends Dublin Zoo, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to, and be heard.

- Implements policies and procedures to safeguard children and young people that reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*, the *Tusla Children First - Child Safeguarding Guide 2017*, and the *Children First Act 2015* through **Dublin Zoo’s Declaration of Guiding Principles to Safeguard Children**.
- Applies the declaration to all paid staff, volunteers, council members and work experience students/interns on work placement within our organisation through comprehensive inductions. All council members, staff, volunteers and interns/work experience students must sign up to and abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration, our child safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures.
- The safeguarding statement and missing and lost child procedures will be shared with contract staff that operate regularly on our site such as the security, first aid, electricians, catering and the cleaning contractors.
- Ensures thorough Garda Vetting is conducted at the recruitment stages of all staff, volunteers and work experience students/interns (as applicable).
- Ongoing training takes place for all relevant staff on Child Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Utilises a comprehensive ‘lost child’ and ‘missing child’ policy and reporting procedures to minimise stress/negative welfare of children and parents who find themselves in this difficult situation.
- Will review the child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every two years or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

In accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, Dublin Zoo has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the site or participating in educational or event activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:

| Risk Identified  | Policies and/or Procedures in Place to Manage Risk   |
|--|--|
| A lost/missing child may be subject to harm from an adult visitor.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dublin Zoo has a comprehensive ‘Lost Child’ and ‘Missing Child’ policy and procedures including the provision of wristbands on entry to enable staff/volunteers to quickly and efficiently track down parents and reunite families.</li> </ul>  |
| A child may be subject to harm from other children in playgrounds where parents may not have a child in view at all times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/guardian supervision is a condition of entry to Dublin Zoo and of use of Dublin Zoo playgrounds and recreational areas.</li> <li>• Staff and volunteers are present throughout Dublin Zoo during operational hours to offer additional safety and support but <u>do not replace</u> the supervision of the primary caregiver.</li> </ul>   |
| Inadequate supervision of children during general visitation.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Small group/family entry</u>: children can only access Dublin Zoo with a supervising adult.</li> <li>• <u>Large group entry</u>: Groups of 10 or more children are provided with discounted entry rates. 1 free adult is granted to every 5 children to ensure adequate supervision ratios.</li> <li>• Where a child or group of children is discovered unsupervised, security is called to identify the whereabouts of the supervising adults.</li> </ul> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Inadequate supervision of children during education programme, workshop, camp, birthday party or family event (e.g. Santa visits, weddings, communion celebrations, overnight family events, Dream Night or online workshop etc.)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All formal education programmes must include supervision by a minimum of one of the visiting school's teachers at all times. However, Dublin Zoo allows for one free adult for every 5 students booked in to ensure adequate supervision ratios are followed.</li> <li>• In classes, the <u>minimum</u> ratio is 1 external teacher and 1 zoo educator per 32 students in formal primary and secondary education.</li> <li>• Dublin Zoo allows for 1 adult free with every 3 children on early years self-guided trips and early years programmes.</li> <li>• The Outreach Officer delivers to a maximum of 30 children in a class and a <u>minimum</u> of one teacher from the hosting school/venue must be present.</li> <li>• Active involvement of parents/guardians or teachers is encouraged and obligatory for specific educational and family events held at Dublin Zoo or during online/virtual workshops.</li> <li>• All online/virtual workshops delivered by Dublin Zoo have two trained, Garda-vetted personnel present to moderate the chat and screens of participants. A strict code of conduct is applied for participants of Dublin Zoo virtual workshops outlined in the Virtual Learning Terms of Engagement Contract.</li> <li>• Work practices are continuously evaluated with guidelines and training updated as appropriate.</li> <li>• Evening events such as Dream Night and overnight events with children must have their parent/guardian present for the full duration of the event.</li> </ul> |
| <p>A child may be subject to harm from staff, volunteers or work experience students.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive recruitment procedures and Garda vetting are in place for all staff who are placed in a teacher/facilitator/volunteer position with children. This includes where a child is unsupervised by a guardian/parent or school teacher while at Dublin Zoo.</li> <li>• All staff, volunteers or work experience students sign to Dublin Zoo's Declaration of Guiding Principles to Safeguard Children.</li> <li>• Workshops, camps and informal education programmes where a parent/guardian is not present has a <u>minimum</u> ratio of:<br/> <u>Vetted staff/volunteer : child</u><br/>           Outdoors            1 : 8<br/>           Indoors             1 : 12</li> <li>• Work experience students/Interns shadow a zoo educator at all times and are never placed in a solo teaching role.</li> <li>• Lost and Missing Child procedures require staff members to double up when a lost/missing child is encountered ensuring the child is with two members of staff.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>A child in an informal education programme (such as Summer Camp, Dino Discovery, Autumn and Spring workshops etc.) going home with unauthorised adult.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision of children participating in the selected informal programming is from drop-off to pick-up. The primary caregiver must 'sign in' their child at the beginning of the camp/workshop and 'sign out' their child back on pick up after the workshop/camp.</li> <li>• Dublin Zoo ensures that no child leaves with another adult unless the primary caregiver has written in advance to the department with the name and contact number of another designated care giver. In the event an unauthorised adult shows up without prior agreement from the primary caregiver, they are called to get verbal permission that the child leaves with the adult that presents.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Incident of inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff or volunteer.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garda vetting required for staff and volunteers working with children.</li> <li>• Dublin Zoo's Declaration of Guidelines on Child Safeguarding is in place and reviewed biennially or when updates to activities take place.</li> </ul>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines on recognising, recording and reporting child safeguarding issues are as outlined in the ‘Good Codes of Practice between Staff/Volunteers and Children to Safeguard Children’ are found in Dublin Zoo’s Employee Handbook and shared with volunteers.</li> <li>• Child safeguarding training provided for staff and volunteers as part of induction and at regular intervals during employment.</li> <li>• Work practices continuously evaluated by D&amp;L Manager, Volunteer Coordinator and D&amp;L Team Lead. Guidelines and training updated as appropriate.</li> </ul>   |
| Incident of inappropriate behaviour by a member of the public while at Dublin Zoo.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security posted at all public entrances to Dublin Zoo.</li> <li>• If a report of inappropriate behaviour is made, security have mobile units to respond to the issue quickly.</li> <li>• Reporting procedures are in place to make a mandated report.</li> <li>• Where available, CCTV monitoring is used to support staff in identifying the location of the member of the public.</li> <li>• Contact is made to An Garda Síochána if the incident is deemed to be a serious risk to children.</li> </ul>  |
| Incident occurring while engaging with children or young people virtually/online.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to inappropriate internet sites prohibited by the use of filters on public access WiFi.</li> <li>• Staff conduct all online zoo-related activities using zoo devices which are monitored and connected to WiFi using a secure network.</li> <li>• All data relating to children is protected in line with the Dublin Zoo’s Declaration of Guiding Principles for Child Safeguarding and the Data Protection Policy.</li> <li>• Where photos of children appear on Dublin Zoo’s website, social media or printed materials, permission has been sought and granted by the child’s primary caregiver, and the permission form is kept on file in the Dublin Zoo’s Discovery &amp; Learning Department.</li> <li>• A code of conduct outlined in the Virtual Learning Terms of Engagement Contract exists between all participants on Dublin Zoo online/virtual workshops and staff.</li> </ul> |
| Incident of inappropriate behaviour by an external media contractor to Dublin Zoo e.g. Moondance, RTE, Today FM, other media companies or personnel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All media recording must include supervision by the child(ren)’s parent/guardian or school teacher. If neither are present a Garda Vetted Dublin Zoo staff member must be present.</li> <li>• Reporting procedures are in place to make a mandated report.</li> </ul>   |

#### 4. CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Dublin Zoo’s Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the *Children First Act 2015*, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and *Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*.


In addition to the procedures listed in the risk assessment, the following procedures and policies support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- A Relevant Person has been appointed.
- A Designated Liaison Person and Deputy have been appointed.

- A list of mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015 is maintained.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for Child Protection and Welfare Reporting are in place.
- Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees are in place.
- Procedure for Managing Child Protection Records is in place.
- A Recruitment and Selection procedure is in place.
- Procedures for Garda Vetting are in place.
- Good Codes of Practice between Workers/Volunteers and Children to Safeguard Children are in place.
- Induction procedure is in place (which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policies and procedures)
- Staff and volunteers working with children have completed the relevant Child Safeguarding Training.
- Policy for Managing Accidents and Incidents are supported by our near-miss and accident reporting procedures in Dublin Zoo.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Dublin Zoo is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.
- This Statement will be reviewed every 2 years or as soon as practical after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
- This statement is displayed in the Discovery & Learning Department and on Dublin Zoo's website. It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with Dublin Zoo. It is readily accessible to primary caregivers on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

Signed: 

Date: 5/12/2023

### Service Provider's name and contact details:

Dr. Christoph Schwitzer, Director of Dublin Zoo, Dublin Zoo, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8

### For further information on this Statement, contact:

| Relevant Person/Designated Liaison Person:  | Deputy Designated Liaison Person:   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Aileen Tennant</i><br/> <i>Head of Discovery and Learning</i><br/> <i>Dublin Zoo.</i><br/> <i>01 474 8912</i></p> | <p><i>John Sweeney</i><br/> <i>Financial Controller</i><br/> <i>Dublin Zoo.</i><br/> <i>01 474 8935</i></p> |

