

Middletown Centre for Autism- Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of service being provided:

Middletown Centre for Autism
35 Church Street,
Middletown
County Armagh
BT60 4HZ

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm (*brief outline of what our service is, what we do and our commitment to safeguard children*):

Middletown Centre was established in 2007 by The Department of Education Ireland and the Department of Education Northern Ireland to:

- To enhance the lives of children and young people with autism and their families, through the delivery of specialist educational services
- To support the promotion of excellence throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland in the education of children and young people with autism

Middletown Centre has 3 main services: By clicking on the links below you will find information on each service.

[Learning Support and Assessment](#)

[Training](#)

[Research](#)

Our commitment to safeguard children

Middletown Centre for Autism gives highest priority to the safety and welfare of children and young people who access our Learning Support and Assessment Service.

Our guiding principles are underpinned by the following legislation and documentation:

Republic of Ireland

- Children First Act 2015
- Child Care Act 1991
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- The National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – 30 November 2021.

Northern Ireland

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – 30 November 2021
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011
- Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015
- Public Services Ombudsman (NI) Act 2016
- Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016
- Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021.
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) publication 'Safeguarding and Protection in Schools – 2017- updated 2022
- Department for Education Circulars- <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/safeguarding-and-child-protection/resources/de-circulars>

Our guiding principles apply to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee/board members, staff, volunteers, and students must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

In all contact with children and young people staff in Middletown Centre for Autism follow the guidelines and procedures described in the Department of Education and Skills ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017’ and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) publication ‘Safeguarding and Protection in Schools - 2017’ – Updated 2020.

3. Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child or young person while availing of our services including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
<p>Staff working directly and indirectly in schools, homes and in the community with children and young people who are both classified as vulnerable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and Board of Directors are vetted through Access NI or An Garda Siochana. • All staff and Board of Directors are provided with a copy of the Centre’s Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and corresponding child protection summary leaflets relevant to the geographical area they are working in. • All staff and Board of Directors attend a child protection and safeguarding training presentation on all Centre’s procedures and protocol including the appropriate pathways to follow should they have a child protection/safeguarding concern. Training presentations on child protection and safeguarding are reviewed in line with any amendments and updates to procedures from both Departments of Education and from the Gateway Team in NI and Tusla in ROI. • Schools and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Centre’s leaflet of child protection and safeguarding procedures which details person to contact should a concern be raised. • Designated staff for child protection are in place for both NI and ROI. <p>The Designated Teacher for Northern Ireland is Jill McCanney.</p>

<p>Work in schools- Direct working with a child/young person and at times with other children/young people in school</p>	<p>The Deputy Designated teacher for NI is Helen Forde</p> <p>The Designated Liaison officer for ROI is Claire Smyton</p> <p>Deputy Designated Liaison officer for ROI is Tara Vernon.</p> <p>Staff always remain visible to other staff members when working directly with a child/young person. A copy of the school's child protection and safeguarding policy is requested. A copy of the Centre's child protection and safeguarding policy is provided to the school.</p> <p>- Staff always remain visible to parent/guardian/responsible adult when working directly with a child/young person. A copy of the Centre's child protection and safeguarding policy is provided to the parent/carer of referral.</p> <p><u>Referenced legislation and documentation</u> <u>Republic of Ireland</u> Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child by a member of staff/volunteer (from things they have done e.g., hurt a child, or failed to do e.g. not reporting a concern)</p>
<p>Home visits- Direct working with a child/young person and at times other siblings.</p>	<p>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – 30 November 2021.</p> <p>Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child caused by a lack of supervision</p> <p>Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child by a visitor to the service (contactors, parents, volunteers, etc.)</p> <p><u>Northern Ireland</u> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – 30 November 2021.</p>

[Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Circular%20202007%20Child%20Protection%20Record%20Keeping%20in%20Schools.PDF>

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Circular%202017-04.pdf>

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Circular%202022%2002%20Children%20Who%20Display%20Harmful%20Sexual%20Behaviour.PDF>

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2015_13.pdf

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2014_27.pdf

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2012_19.pdf

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_1999_10_0.pdf

Direct work with child or young person in an environment outside of school and home.

Community visits – 2 staff will be present on all community visits. If a parent/guardian can attend 1 staff member is acceptable.

A risk assessment is completed prior to each community visit listing the venue and record of any possible risks with mitigations listed.

Referenced legislation and documentation

Republic of Ireland

Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child on outings by a member of staff/volunteer/stranger/peer

Northern Ireland- As above under Northern Ireland,

Use of IT resources to correspond and use software with children and young people.

Online safety-

- IT policy is shared with all staff along with regular training from our IT officer on safety measures when accessing the internet.
- Use of emails- Staff can correspond directly with a referral where there is a specific reason to do so, with the parent/guardian's permission and by copying the parent/guardian into each email.
- If internet access is required to use software on Centre iPad's, the IT policy and procedures are followed. Only devices provided by the Centre are permitted to be used in the undertaking of Centre business.
- All Centre devices are encrypted.

Referenced legislation and documentation

Republic of Ireland

Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child from the use/misuse of digital images/unauthorised photography.

Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) through access to ICT (e.g., social media or web access, electronic contact, etc).

Northern Ireland

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – 30 November 2021.

[Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2007_01.pdf

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/updated-circular-further-guidance-schools-supporting-remote-learning>

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Circular%202016%2027.pdf>

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Circular%202016%2026.pdf>

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2013_25.pdf

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2011_22.pdf

4. Procedures

Our Child Protection and 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)
- Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) publication 'Safeguarding and Protection in Schools - 2017'- Updated 2020
- Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011
- Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015
- Public Services Ombudsman (NI) Act 2016
- Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016
- Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021.

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

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla (ROI) and Gateway (NI).
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

As noted, in all contact with children and young people staff in Middletown Centre for Autism follow the guidelines and procedures described in:

- The Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) publication 'Safeguarding and Protection in Schools - 2017' - Updated 2020
- The Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

The link to our child protection and safeguarding leaflets for both NI and ROI are listed below:

https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Child_Protection_Leaflet_NI_2021_22.pdf

https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Child_Protection_Leaflet_ROI_2021_22.pdf

https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Safeguarding_Vulnerable_Adults_Leaflet_NI_2021_22.pdf

https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Safeguarding_Vulnerable_Adults_Leaflet_ROI_2021_22.pdf

5. Implementation

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

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

(Provider) Signed:  **CEO for Middletown Centre for Autism** jim.lennon@middletownautism.com

For queries, please contact Jill McCanney- Head of Learning Support and Assessment- (Email) _____, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.

Jill.McCanney@middletownautism.com