



1. PURPOSE AND VALUES

Helium Arts is a national children's arts and health organisation. We bring arts, creativity and play to children and young people in hospitals and healthcare settings across Ireland. One of Helium's core values is childhood wellbeing - we value a child's right to a quality childhood, regardless of the state of their health. We respect the individuality and autonomy of older children and teenagers and are attentive to their different needs. We believe nurturing imagination and expressing creativity is a principal part of developing childhood wellbeing. We place children at the centre of our work and their safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and contracted artists.

2. ACTIVITIES

Creativity in Hospital - Helium's artists are primarily based in Paediatric Outpatient Clinics working closely with the medical community and giving children, young people and their families the opportunity to try out different age-appropriate creative activities and get to know the artists.

Creativity in the Community - In our community-based, group workshops children and young people get to experience the arts in their many forms over a four to six week period. Art forms may include painting, crafting, animation, adventure arts, printmaking, sound design, film-making and much more.

Early Years - Helium Arts' current early years project is a multi-sensory performance experience created for families with young children who have complex needs. Artists visit families in their homes, using music, sound, puppetry, movement and tactile environments to provide families with new ways of bonding with their child.

Professional development - Training and support is provided for artists and healthcare staff to support their practice in working with children and young people.

3. PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- All staff and contracted artists are Garda vetted.
- All staff and contracted artists have been made aware of and encouraged to undertake HSE Children First online and Túsla Online Child Protection training.
- All staff and contracted artists have a copy of Helium Arts' Child Protection Policy and have signed a declaration that they are familiar with the procedures contained within it.
- All child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.

- All children engaging with Helium Arts' activities will have parental consent to do so.
- Informed consent is sought for the use of any images/videos of children taking part in workshops/events or images/videos of their work. All data is stored in compliance with GDPR. In the case of hospital based projects, it is Helium's policy to work in consultation with each hospital to agree a procedures on consent around the use of images.
- All programmes are developed in consultation with children, their parents, healthcare staff, and/or patient support groups.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
- The best interests of the child are paramount.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks. (Risk in italics followed by procedures to manage risk)

1) Lack of awareness of child protection duty and noncompliance with Child Protection Policy (e.g. delays in making necessary referrals)

- Staff, artists and project partners are provided with the Child Protection Policy.
- Staff and artists are provided with training every two years to ensure they are equipped to deal with disclosures and to make referrals if required.
- Staff and Artists are required to complete the HSE Children First Online Training and Tusla Online Child Protection Training.
- Two DLP's are named and known to the staff/volunteers/parents/on website.

- A relevant person, on site, will be appointed as the first point of contact regarding this Child Safeguarding Statement.
- The Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually.

2) *Allegation of abuse where a member of Helium Arts' staff/contracted artist is the alleged perpetrator*

- Staff and contractors are Garda Vetted before they begin work.
- All staff are familiar with the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Person or directly to Tusla.
- Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee. Immediate action will be taken in line with the disciplinary process.

3) *Allegation of abuse where a parent/guardian, healthcare professional, support worker is the alleged perpetrator*

- All staff are familiar with the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Person or directly to Tusla.
- Project partners will be notified.

4) *Child makes a disclosure.*

- All staff are familiar with the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Person or directly to Tusla.

5) *A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff*

- All staff are familiar with the procedures to make a referral to the Designated Person or directly to Tusla.

6) *A partner discloses something*

- Helium Arts will engage with partners on joint report making where appropriate. Our Child Safeguarding Policy is shared with partners in advance of projects and Helium received a copy of Child Safeguarding Policies from all partners. A clear protocol will determine who takes the lead in the event of a disclosure so there will be no confusion.

7) Risk of harm due to the use of unauthorised photography.

A code of conduct will be drawn up, collaboratively, by staff and participants at the start of each workshop. Consent forms are signed by parents for the use of images/information in keeping with our Data Protection Policy. Use of mobile phones/cameras/ video/posting on social media will be strictly monitored during workshops and only used within the context of the workshop itself.

8) Risk of harm from bullying.

Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will feature prominently in the code of conduct, drawn up collaboratively at the start of each workshop. All staff/volunteers have access to Helium's anti-bullying policy and the volunteer or employee handbook in the event they themselves experience bullying. They are actively encouraged to raise the issue with their line Manager.

9) Risk of harm from visitors to our workshops.

- All staff/volunteers/interns are Garda Vetted.
- We do not have unknown visitors to our workshops.
- Parents may be present but have completed the sign in sheet and application form including address and contact details.

10) Risk of harm on outings

Because of the nature of our work with seriously ill children we have a medic available at all times. Our workshops usually take place in hospitals or medical centres. In the event of outings we work as if onsite ensuring:-

- Adequate supervision and ratio of adults to children,
- Welcoming and encouraging parents to take part
- Written parental consent
- Adequate insurance for activities
- Stringent recording of any allergies; medical conditions or special needs
- Presence of a medic as onsite
- First aid kit on site.
- Safe transport in suitable vehicle

5. PROCEDURES

We, at Helium Arts, are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We adhere to the recommendations of the guidelines and sources listed below for the continuous development and implementation of the Helium Arts Child Protection Policy. All Helium Arts staff and artists are additionally required to comply with all hospital/health centre and partner organisations' policies on behalf of Helium Arts.

Our 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*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following 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;
- Procedure for appointing a designated liaison person

All procedures listed are available upon request.

6. 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 services.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 1st August 2020 or as soon as practical after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: Helene Hugel, CEO/Artistic Director

For queries, please contact: Helene Hugel, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015. Designated Liaison Person. Helium Arts, 22 Pearse Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. 044 – 939 6960 helene@helium.ie www.helium.ie