

Caring and Sharing Association (“CASA”) - Child Safeguarding Statement

CASA is a volunteer led organisation supporting people with disabilities. CASA organises regular social events where each member is supported by a volunteer. CASA has 20 local social groups. Although as a general rule, members are over 18 years old, CASA may also provide services to children and teenagers under 18 years of age (collectively referred to as children in this document) with intellectual and physical disabilities through a range of social activities.

CASA groups generally meet once a month for a social event in various venues, usually hotels or parish centres. Occasionally groups will also go on outings to venues such as the cinema, bowling and shopping.

CASA operates a person centred one to one care model in a supported group environment. Each group has a dedicated group leader/leaders who supervise and manage the group at all events. This care model is an important element of our approach to Child Safeguarding.

CASA strives to encourage the following behaviour:

- Listening to children
- Valuing and respecting children as individuals
- Involving children in decision making as appropriate
- Encouraging and praising children
- Encouraging the ability in each child

CASA believes that it is important for the protection of all concerned that staff, volunteers, children and young people be informed and have guidelines on what is expected, and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour with the organisation (see CASA Child Safeguarding Policy)

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance and Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy Procedure and Practice, the Board of CASA has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

- 1 The Designated Liaison Person (“**DLP**”) is Zoë Franklin.
- 2 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (“**Deputy DLP**”) is Úna Sheehan.
- 3 The Board of CASA recognises that child protection and welfare considerations are of the utmost importance and must be reflected in all of CASA’s policies, procedures, practices and activities. CASA will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child safeguarding and welfare.

CASA will:

- a. recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;

- b. fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- c. fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- d. adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- e. develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- f. fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Risk Assessment

In undertaking this risk assessment, the board of CASA has endeavoured to identify, as far as possible, the risks of harm that are relevant to children in our care and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, CASA has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

	Risk identified	Procedure in Place to manage Identified Risk
1.	Risk of potential danger to children in our care especially when events are in public places	One to one care model applies at all CASA events within a team or group based supervisory structure headed by group leaders. One volunteer carer supports one child within this structure.
2.	Risk associated with children using bathrooms	Two volunteers must be in attendance at all bathroom breaks, and, where possible, children are encouraged to use the wheelchair accessible bathroom for privacy.
3.	Detection of abuse	All volunteers assigned to care for children must have completed child protection training. Mandatory reporting of abuse applies under the Children's First Act 2015.
4.	Disclosure and response to abuse	Policies and reporting procedures are in place.
5.	Recruitment of inappropriate person/criminal record	Safe recruitment policies and procedures are in place. Garda vetting is mandatory and volunteers must be

		Garda vetted before starting to volunteer.
6.	Risk of flight during an event	One to one policy ensures strong supervision.
7.	Risk of food allergies	Member Profile forms available to all leaders outlining information relating to food allergies. Interaction with parents / guardians take place before events.
8.	Medical emergencies	Overall leader determines and actions appropriate response. Nurse or first aider in attendance, where possible, at CASA events.
9.	Bullying	Anti-Bullying policy in place. One to one care model also provides an important safeguard.
10.	Risk of potential harm to children resulting from postings on social media	Social Media policy in place and permission is requested before photos are posted online.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of CASA

Date: August 2023

Procedures

In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures outlined in CASA's Child safeguarding Policy support our intention to safeguard children in our care while they are availing of our service:

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

All procedures listed are available upon request.

Implementation

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

This Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 8th May 2025 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed _____
Chairperson of CASA

Date: August 2023

For queries, please contact Zoë Franklin on 01 872 5300 or zoe@casa.ie (Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015)