



Child protection policy

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Introduction

Educate Together has paramount concern for the welfare of children and the protection of their rights. This concern stems from the legal commitment to child-centred education contained in the Educate Together Charter, the organisation's obligations under law and a profound moral and ethical commitment.

Educate Together acknowledges and supports the standards detailed in the "Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children" published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2011. This Guidance is available on that Department's website and can be accessed at:

<http://www.dcy.a.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>

Educate Together endorses the key messages outlined in this Guidance regarding the duty to protect children including:

- that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility
- that children will have safe lives where everyone is attentive to their wellbeing and
- that people who work with children understand their responsibility for safe practice and the reporting of concerns.

Educate Together is committed to the principles of Children First which are as follows:

Every organisation, both public and private, that is providing services for children or that is in regular direct contact with children should:

(i) ensure best practice in the recruitment of staff or volunteers, which includes Garda vetting, taking up of references, good HR practices in interviewing, induction training, probation and ongoing supervision and management;

(ii) ensure that staff members or volunteers are aware of how to recognise signs of child abuse or neglect;

(iii) develop guidance and procedures for staff and/or volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the safety and welfare of children involved with the organisation. These procedures should not deviate from the current Children First: National Guidance, but may offer further elaboration to ensure local relevance and applicability. It is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure that such guidance and procedures are in place;

(iv) identify a designated person to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the HSE Children and Family Services or to An Garda Síochána.

(Extract from paragraph 1.3.1 Children First Guidelines, 2011)

Educate Together understands that legislation has been published which will place elements of this Guidance on a statutory basis and it will review this policy document once the legislation is passed by the Oireachtas to ensure that the policy is compliant with it.

Educate Together

Educate Together has a National Office and region-based operations.

Educate Together has a number of different roles. It is

- a Patron of schools
- a representative organisation for patron bodies who have signed up to the Educate Together Charter and are members of the Company and
- a recognised School Management Organisation, for
 - Boards of Management of schools which operate under the patronage of Educate Together
 - Boards of Management of Schools whose patron bodies have signed up to the Educate Together Charter and who are member of the Company and
 - Boards of Management who have signed up to the Educate Together Charter and who are members of the Company.

For the purposes of this document a Board of Management of a school which has Educate Together as its patron shall be referred to as “an ET Board of Management”.

Compliance by schools

Patrons of schools are responsible for the establishment and oversight of schools under their patronage in accordance with the Education Act 1998 (as amended). They also have a specific oversight role under the 2011 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (**the DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures**).

Boards of Management have specific roles and responsibilities under the DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures and other related legal obligations.

Educate Together requires formal assurances from each ET Board of Management that it has implemented the DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures issued by the Department of Education and Skills (**the DES**) including but not limited to:

- it has adopted, without modification, the DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools, including but not limited to,

- that the appointment of the DLP is publicly displayed
- that all staff and volunteer appointments have been carried out in accordance with good recruitment practices including compliance with vetting requirements and taking up of references etc
- training needs have been assessed and addressed
- that all staff have been instructed and trained regarding their responsibilities under the Procedures
- the annual review of child protection procedures has taken place
- confirmation of the annual review has been sent to the Parent Association
- policies and related documents are available to all relevant bodies
- that it is fully implementing the Stay Safe programme
- that an active culture of child protection is maintained in the school.

Confirming compliance by ET Boards of Management

<i>Policy CP001 - Annual reporting of child protection procedures</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
Patronage Sub-committee of Boards of Directors CEO	Educate Together Boards of Management	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	June 2015	

Assurances are sought from each ET Board of Management that the Annual Review for the Child Protection Policy is complete and a copy submitted to the National Office.

The National Office will maintain a register of such assurances.

The CEO will present a report in January of each year to the Patronage sub-committee of the Board of Directors listing the ET Boards of Management who have complied with this requirement.

In the event of an ET Board of Management, which has Educate Together as its patron, failing to provide such evidence of compliance, the Patronage sub-committee will write formally to the Board of Management of the school concerned seeking compliance within a specified period. If they fail to comply within that period, the

Subcommittee will consider the appropriate action, which could include advising the Patron that Sections 16 and/or Section 19 of the Education Act should be invoked.

If either, a patron body that is a member of the Company and who has signed up to the Educate Together Charter and/or an ET Board of Management which does not have Educate Together as its Patron, have not ensured that they and/or their school(s) are compliant with the DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures, they are not operating in a manner that is compatible with Educate Together's Charter or membership of the Company and the Board of Directors will take appropriate action to deal with this.

National Office and region-based operations

Educate Together does not directly provide services for children, nor is it in regular direct contact with them and ordinarily children are not present in the National Office.

Disclosure of a child protection concern to the National office

If a disclosure of a child protection concern is received by any staff member of Educate Together, the relevant DLP must be informed in accordance with the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. In the case of a disclosure involving a member school of Educate Together, the staff member must also inform the DLP in the National Office.

Presence of children and young people under the age of 18 in the National Office

This procedure covers the procedures which are adopted when children are present in the National Office or at events organised by the National Office.

<i>Policy CP002 - Presence of children and young people under the age of 18 at the National Office</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
CEO All Educate Together National Office staff	All Educate Together National Office Staff	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	March 2015	

Children under the age of 13 are only permitted on the premises of the National Office if accompanied by an adult who is either their parent/guardian or 'in loco parentis' (for instance, the child's school teacher, relative or any other adult to whom responsibility for the child has been given by the parent/ guardian).

An unaccompanied child aged between 13 and 18 years of age may only be permitted on the premises of the National Office if the relevant member of staff has written consent from the parent/guardian/school of the child concerned. Such written consent should be on the form provided (see Appendices). All such written consents will be filed with office HR documents, and kept for a period of seven years.

Where an unaccompanied child arrives unexpectedly to the National Office, a member of staff should explain the above requirements, and arrange for the child to leave as soon as hospitably possible.

In the case of a child under the age of 13, staff may assume a supervisory role for only a very short period of time and should always inform their line manager.

Staff must ensure that when meeting a child this is done in the presence of others. Travel arrangements for the child must be organised in advance in conjunction with his/her parents/ guardians/ school. Lifts in cars/other vehicles should not be offered.

If a child accompanies an adult at a meeting, the child must stay with the adult at all times. In such circumstances, staff may refuse to proceed with a meeting. In general, the attendance of children at meetings organised for adults is discouraged.

Educate Together will appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP. These staff members will be trained in these roles and a notice identifying them and appropriate contact details will be displayed in the National Office.

If, in the course of a child's presence in the National Office, a staff member has concerns for the child's safety, or the child makes a child protection disclosure, the staff member should inform the DLP. The DLP must record such a conversation and make a determination whether or not to inform the relevant authority. Children attending National Office events, courses and conferences

<i>Policy CP003 - Children attending National Office events</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
CEO All Educate Together National Office staff	All Educate Together National Office staff	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	March 2015	

Children under the age of 13 may only attend National Office events if accompanied by a parent/guardian or an adult 'in loco parentis' (for instance, the child's school teacher, relative or any other adult to whom responsibility for the child has been given by the parent/guardian).

A child aged between 13 and 18 years of age may only attend national office events if the relevant member of staff has written consent from the parent/guardian/ school of the person concerned. Such written consent should be on the form provided (see

Appendices). All such written consents will be filed with office HR documents, and kept for a period of seven years.

Care must be taken to ensure that children do not become involved in national events in an inappropriate way and parents who wish to participate in national events which are organised for adults, should be discouraged from bringing their children.

In the event of children attending a national event as presenters or performers, the National Office staff organising the event will ensure that the school(s) concerned has/have appointed a responsible adult who will be responsible for the children during the event. The school will ensure that it adheres to the DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures in the appointment of this person. This person will be clearly identified to all National Office staff working on the event and all matters of concern will be communicated directly to him/her.

In the case of a national event that is hosted by a school, The National Office staff organising the event will make it absolutely clear to the school that any children of the school attending or hosting tours or activities are the responsibility of the school and that the National Office is not taking over any of the school's responsibilities in relation to Child Protection or other safety issues during the proceedings.

Educate Together will make reasonable efforts, if requested, to arrange creche and child-care facilities in support of its national events. These facilities will only be operated by qualified child-care professionals, whose backgrounds have been checked, who have been trained in child protection and who have complied with Garda vetting requirements.

All staff working at an event organised by the National Office will be made aware of the identity and contact details for the DLP/child protection officer (as appropriate) on duty for that event.

In the event of courses for children operated by the National Office, particular attention will be paid to ensuring, as far as possible, that all course mentors, teachers and administrators have been Garda vetted, reference checking has taken place, they are trained in child protection and that a DLP and DDLP have been appointed.

The CEO will ensure that records are maintained confirming that the procedures above have complied with.

Representing Educate Together through participation in/attendance at events

Staff members requesting children to represent Educate Together at events should ensure that:

- Consent forms from a parent/guardian have been received.

- Appropriate travel arrangements are in place to and from the event, as agreed with parent/guardians.
- Suitable child protection arrangements are in place.
- The child has been given contact details for the DLP and Deputy DLP for that event.

Management of images of children in Educate Together media

Educate Together makes extensive use of images of children in its communications and promotional material. This document details the standards and conditions of use Educate Together will adhere to in capturing and publishing images of children.

The overarching purpose of the procedures and policies below is to ensure children are not inappropriately depicted in any image captured or published by Educate Together.

All staff and volunteers involved in capturing, processing, publishing or storing images of children are expected to act at all times responsibly and with this objective in mind.

Definition: As referred to in this policy, a child’s image means both still and movie images of a child held on any media. For the purposes of this document, the term “image” includes audio and video content. In this definition is also assumed that a child’s image is an image of sufficient size and quality that it could be reasonable assumed that the child could be identified.

Educate Together will obtain written consent from the child’s parent/guardian if aged below 13 years of age and will also obtain written consent from the child if he/she is aged between 13 to 18 years of age.

Capturing images of Children

<i>Policy CP004 - Children attending National Office events</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
CEO All Educate Together National Office staff	All Educate Together National Office staff	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	March 2015	

Educate Together staff attending school events with the intention of taking photographs or capturing video must alert the school principal in advance of images being taken and will only proceed to film or photograph with his/her written consent. They will also follow any restrictions or limits required by the school.

Educate Together staff will provide an assurance in advance that any images captured will only be used with the express permission of the school. Staff are recommended to carry identification and be prepared to offer an explanation for the work if working in public or private places particularly where spontaneous or unplanned images are recorded.

Educate Together staff will only capture images of children at national events when instructed to do so by the manager in charge of the event and will only capture images of children with the written consent of their parents or guardians and the child themselves if aged between 13 and 18 years of age (as appropriate). At such events, efforts must be made to ensure that attendees are aware that filming may take place.

General guidelines to be followed in all cases:

- *Photographs/Video should capture group rather than individual activity as much as possible*
- *Image capture should generally be of children at events, in class or at play*
- *No images should be taken of children that would breach their privacy or impinge upon their personal dignity (changing rooms, bathrooms, use of physical aids) etc*
- *When taking images, staff should not in any circumstances capture any images of children in distress or embarrassment*
- *The children should be appropriately dressed.*

Consents:

- *Images taken by Educate Together staff at national events will require written consent of their parents or guardians and the child themselves if aged between 13 and 18 years of age (as appropriate).*
- *The capture of images on a school premises, with the consent of the principal, will be covered by the school's image usage agreement*
- *Educate Together staff filming at a school will specifically check with the principal on the status of the school's image usage policies and agreements*
- *Images captured that feature individual children will require additional individual written consents from their parents/guardians and from the child themselves if aged between 13 to 18 years of age (as appropriate).*

Usage of images of Children

<i>Policy CP005 - Using images of children</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
CEO All Educate Together National Office staff	All Educate Together National Office staff	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	March 2015	

All images captured by Educate Together staff at school or national events are the property of Educate Together and cannot be used by individual staff members for personal use.

Images of children will only be used by Educate Together to illustrate the nature of its work.

Educate Together images of children will not be lent or issued to third parties without the express written consent of the subject of the image and/or their parent/guardian.

Educate Together will not identify or name individual children in captions accompanying an image without securing the express written consent of the child and/or his/her parent/guardian (as appropriate).

Educate Together will not identify individual children in images hosted on its websites or social media unless there is a compelling reason for so doing (Winning a national prize etc.) and the child and/or the child's parent or legal guardian have given express written consent (as appropriate).

Educate Together will only use images of children online on websites or social media pages where the child and/or the child's parent or legal guardian have given express written consent (as appropriate). This includes; Educate Together's Websites, Facebook, social media and online platforms.

Social Media

Images of children posted to Educate Together's social media platforms (e.g. Facebook) by followers should conform to the standards Educate Together maintain for their own images.

Images posted by followers or contributors in breach of Educate Together image policies will be removed.

Print Media

Images of children taken by staff members or by photographers commissioned by Educate Together, may be used by Educate Together, for promotional purposes in printed material only as long as they are accompanied with signed usage consent forms.

Children’s images not captured by Educate Together staff will require written consent from the relevant school authorities, from the image subject if aged between 13 to 18 years of age and his/her parent/guardian (as appropriate) for such usage. In such cases, Educate Together will accept the written assurance of the child’s school principal that such written consent has been granted and that the school will take full legal responsibility for the publication of the image concerned.

Storage of images of Children

<i>Policy CP006 - Storage of images of children</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
CEO All Educate Together National Office staff	All Educate Together National Office staff	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	March 2015	

Educate Together will take reasonable and practical steps to protect images of children.

Physical images and physical storage media (tapes, disks etc.) involving images of children will be stored in secure filing spaces in the National Office.

Digital files involving images of children will be stored inline with our data protection policy.

Provision of images of Children to third-parties

<i>Policy CP007 - Providing images of children to third parties</i>		
Applies to	Effects	Authority
CEO All Educate Together National Office staff	All Educate Together National Office staff	CEO
Review By:	Board of Directors	Annually
Approved/Last Review:	March 2015	

Copyright

Educate Together owns the copyright of all images taken by its staff on its behalf.

Educate Together recognises the copyright of the originators of an image and will use said images only under the terms of its usage agreement.

Consent may be withdrawn at any time by Parent/guardian or child in writing for future use of an image.

Third Party Usage

Educate Together will provide rights to reproduce children's images that it owns to approved third parties (e.g. national/local media, educational publishers) only where additional usage written consents have been secured from the subject of the image if aged between 13 to 18 years of age and the relevant school/parent/guardian (as appropriate) and where a manager has given written permission, having specifically checked, and is reasonably convinced that the image or images will be appropriately used and protected.

The Communications Section of the National Office will maintain a file of approved third parties and will update the same on an annual basis or more frequently if circumstances require.

The overarching purpose of this procedure is to ensure that children are not inappropriately depicted in any image provided by Educate Together to third parties and that as far as possible those third parties will handle such images responsibly.

All staff and volunteers involved in capturing, processing, publishing or storing images of children are expected to act at all times responsibly and with these objectives in mind.

Appendices:

Appendix one

Consent form for parents/guardians of children aged between 13 and 18 years of age

Event for which consent is being given: _____

Location of event: _____ Date of event: _____

Designated Liaison Person: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Name of person for whom consent is being given:

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ School (where applicable): _____

Name of person consenting (please print):

Relationship to person for whom consent is being given:

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

[] I confirm that I consent to the above named attending this event.

[] I confirm that photographs of the above named may be used by Educate Together with their consent.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Signed: _____ (Attendee)

Consent form for parents/Guardians of children aged below 13 years of age

Event for which consent is being given: _____

Location of event: _____ Date of event: _____

Designated Liaison Person: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Name of person for whom consent is being given:

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ School (where applicable): _____

Name of person consenting (please print):

Relationship to person for whom consent is being given:

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

[] I confirm that I consent to the above named attending this event.

[] I confirm that photographs of the above named may be used by Educate Together with their consent.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)