

# Health & Safety Document, and Child Protection Policy: Fingal Poetry Festival

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## 1. Definitions

**Fingal Poetry Festival:** An annual festival, with the aim of bringing poetry and music together in scenic settings in County Fingal, such as Skerries Mills. The festival started in 2020 but following on from a longer standing annual event – Poetry at the Mills. The festival is supported by the Arts Council, Fingal County Council and Poetry Ireland.

**Fingal Poetry Festival Staff:** For the purpose of this document, Fingal Poetry Festival Staff includes all volunteers and paid workers for the festival, including poets, workshop facilitators, photographers, videographers and stewards.

**Minor:** A person under the age of full legal responsibility, i.e. under 18 years of age.

**Mandated persons:** People who have contact with children and/or families who, by virtue of their qualifications, training and experience, are in a key position to help protect children from harm.

**Festival Health & Safety Co-ordinator:** The person in charge of the overall health and safety for the festival. More details in section 3.

**For the Fingal Poetry Festival 2024,** the mandated person and health and safety co-ordinator is **Karen McCaffrey** 087 2255399.

**Mandated concerns:** As a mandated person, under legislation mandated persons are required to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, to the Authorised Person within Tusla. Full definitions and details on the Tusla website.

## 2. General Policy Statement

The Organising Committee for the Fingal Poetry Festival are committed to providing a safe environment for all participants, whether staff or member of the public, including for any children and young people with whom the Festival interacts. We will work with the other relevant authorities to ensure all aspects of the Festival comply with the required regulations.

## 3. Health and Safety at Fingal Poetry Festival

The organising committee of the Festival understand their responsibilities as follows:

- i. to providing a safe environment for all participating individuals of the Festival
- ii. to appoint a Festival Health and Safety co-ordinator

- iii. to provide the appropriate level of staff at each event during the festival to ensure health & safety standards are maintained
- iv. to brief the staff of the Festival on their individual responsibilities
- v. to specifically address any risks to, and ensure the safety of, minors attending events
- vi. to manage any incidents in an efficient and appropriate manner
- vii. to record any incidents according to good practice
- viii. to review any safety issues that occurred during the Festival and document them for future years' reference
- ix. to record all relevant Health & Safety information in an Event Safety File

The Festival Health & Safety co-ordinator will be responsible for the following:

- i. Maintaining the Event Safety File
- ii. Setting up & maintaining the Risk Assessments for Each Venue & Event
- iii. Co-ordinating with the rest of the Organising Committee on relevant Health & Safety issues
- iv. Co-ordinating with any relevant organisations / authorities in planning the safety during the event, including venue managers.
- v. Co-ordinating the briefing of the staff

#### 4. Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to staff or minors while working for or availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	<b>Risk identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage identified risk</b>
1	Risk of physical harm to staff and attendees at specific Festival events	See Appendix 1
2	Risk of harm to minors from Festival staff	<p>In cases where children attend Fingal Poetry Festival events but remain under the care of their parents or care-givers, Fingal Poetry Festival staff are not required to be Garda vetted.</p> <p>In cases where children are left in the care of Fingal Poetry Festival staff, those staff don't have to be Garda vetted before engaging with children. However the Health and Safety person must have Garda vetting, or must liaise with a Garda vetted person (ideally someone who works full time with children) to properly assess any risk of harm to children.</p>

		There must always be at least two children in the room with a member of the team. If a child needs to be brought to the toilet, it is recommended that two children are brought to the toilet together. Children should not be left unaccompanied.
3	Risk of harm to minors from communication with Fingal Poetry Festival staff	Fingal Poetry Festival staff must never contact minors via phone or online. Correspondence should be sent to parent/guardian.
4	Risk of harm to minors from social media	Under no circumstances should Fingal Poetry Festival staff contact minors via social media. Staff should not engage directly with minors on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok or any other social media websites/applications. Social media 'friend requests' from minors should not be accepted.
5	Risk of harm to minors from video and photography	Fingal Poetry Festival staff must obtain parent/guardian consent at the time of the capturing of an image regarding the use of image captured of minors. Images must only be used for promotional purposes. When recording videos and/or taking photos, minors should ensure all identifiable children have consented to the photo. This can be done by asking their permission before using the phone. In a group photograph scenario, it must be made clear by the photographer children who do not wish to be photographed have the option to opt out of and stand behind the camera.
6	Risk of transmission of Covid	All government guidelines will be followed at all times. Staff meetings will be held online where possible. Each venue and event will be assessed individually, as per Appendix 1.

## 5. Procedures

### Child Safeguarding Statement

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 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 staff of a child availing of our service**

Fingal Poetry Festival follows the Children First Act 2015 & Tusla guidelines.

- **Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of festival staff to work with children**

All staff are subject to full Garda Vetting before commencing with Fingal Poetry Festival, if deemed relevant by the festival committee.

All staff may have references checked from previous employers/teachers etc. during the recruitment process, if deemed relevant by the festival committee.

- **Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm**

Training is carried out yearly, in advance of the Festival, for Festival staff.

- **Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla**

Mandated concerns are reported to Tusla as soon as possible in accordance with the Children First Act.

- **Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons**

The mandated persons are listed in our Safeguarding documents and staff are made aware of them.

## **6. Fingal Poetry Festival Meetings & Training**

Fingal Poetry Festival staff must attend (online or in-person) health and safety meetings for training & review of the Health and Safety / Child Protection Policy, if relevant to their role in the Festival. Training will be recorded and can be reviewed if needed.

For the duration of Covid, online meetings are preferred, where appropriate.

## **7. First Aid**

There must be a first aid kit at large adult events, and events with children at all times, and all staff present must know how to access this.

At children's events, if children are to be left in the care of Fingal Poetry Festival Staff, there must be a first aid officer on site at all times.

At children's events, if children are not to be left in the care of Fingal Poetry Festival Staff, there is not the need for a first aid officer on site at all times. However, if one is available, that is preferable. As many Festival events are expected to be held close to open pharmacies, this gives the staff access to first aid officers and additional first aid supplies.

## 8. Incident File

Any incident regarding the child's pastoral care - however insignificant - must be recorded electronically on a file held by the designated Health and Safety person, and approved by the chairperson of the Fingal Poetry Festival.

## 9. Disclosure

If a child makes a disclosure, it should be reported in detail including times, dates and witnesses, in a file held by the designated Health & Safety person, and approved by the chairperson of the Fingal Poetry Festival.

Senior leadership & Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible, as relevant. Reporting to Tusla should be done by the mandated person as soon as possible as per the Children First Act.

If a child is at risk of immediate danger, the tutor or staff member must report this immediately to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).

## 10. Implementation

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

This Health and Safety and Child Protection document will be reviewed within 3 months of the festival or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

## Appendix 1 – List of 2024 Fingal Poetry Festival events and associated safety procedures

**General:** All online events are recorded, and recordings to be uploaded to Google drive specified. Event manager to email health & safety person after each event, outlining any incidences, and any concerns or recommendations for future. This is to be done even if everything went perfectly.

**Covid:** All government guidelines to be followed at all times.

Event / Date & Time / Location	Capacity	Min Number of Staff Needed	Additional Safety Concerns
Festival Launch Party, Skerries Mills, 7/9 @ 8pm	60	4	<i>Stairs and stair lift. Lighting in car park</i>
Mandala Making, Red Island, 13/9, 13.30	25	2	<i>Grass may be wet</i>

Fingal Poetry Grand Slam, Little Theatre, 13/9 @ 7pm	90	6	<i>Note 1</i>
Harbour Poetry Walk – 14/9 @11am	30	3	<i>Choosing a safe, accessible route for all</i>  <i>Note 1</i>
Poems signed sealed delivered, Sailing Club 14/9 @1.30pm	50	1	<i>Note 1</i>
Family poetry fest in Floraville – 14/9 @ 2-4	100	10	<i>Note 2</i> No unaccompanied children
Poetry Trail – self guided walk	n/a		<i>Note 2</i>
Poetry and Music at the Monument, Prosper Fingal– 14/9 @ 3.30pm	30	4	<i>Note 1</i>
Poetry and all that Jazz, Little Theatre, 14/9 @7pm	90	5	<i>Note 1</i>
Ardgillan Poetry Walk, 15/9 @11am	25	2	<i>Choosing a safe accessible path for all</i> <i>Note 1</i>

1 = Ticketed event, announcements will be made to report any incidents to t-shirt wearing staff. Hand sanitiser will be available.

Note 2 = Non-ticketed event where numbers are controlled at discretion of staff, announcements will be made to report any incidents to t-shirt wearing staff

## Queries

For queries, please contact  
Ernestine Woelger 087 7424352 or  
Karen Mc Caffrey 087 2255399.