



Child Safeguarding Statement

Castlecomer Discovery Park is a natural woodland park with lakes and a Visitor Centre. It is a social-community enterprise set up to generate local employment and promote rural tourism. It acts on a non-profit basis. Our activities are designed so that children and adults can experience new challenges, develop new skills, realise their abilities, experience success and enhance personal skills in a child-centred safe and enjoyable manner.

Castlecomer Discovery Park provides a range of educational and recreational activities to children and their families. Castlecomer Discovery Park staff members have a variety of levels of contact with children.

Activities/Programmes include:

- Education tours and field studies in the woodland, Visitor Centre and geodomes
- School Tours with instructor led access to adventure activities and guided tours of the woodland and Coal Mining Exhibition for school children
- Teambuilding sessions for clubs and teams
- Access and entry to adventure activities
- Seasonal Activity Camps and workshops
- Family Christmas Experience

Castlecomer Discovery Park believes that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Our objective is to ensure that through our range of activities and interactions that the best interest of the child is continually at the forefront of our operational procedures.

Castlecomer Discovery Park agrees that:

- The protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- We will fully comply with our obligations under the Children First Act 2015, and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children.
- We will fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child safeguarding measures.
- We promote safe practices to mitigate the possibility or harm to children and protect our staff from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- Confidentiality requirements when dealing with child protection matters will be respected and carried out accordingly.

Castlecomer Discovery Park is committed to safeguarding children through the following processes:

- Comprehensive recruitment of all staff
- Thorough vetting including Garda vetting (as applicable)
- Comprehensive training and induction protocols and procedures
- Child safeguarding policy and training, which includes a code of conduct for staff interacting with children and visitors
- Comprehensive health and safety policy and risk assessments for all activities and events.
- Lost child policy and reporting procedures.



Risk Assessment

We have carried out a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Taking the definition of Harm in relation to a child as: “assault, ill treatment, or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or sexual abuse of the child.

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
The child may be subject to harm from staff.	Comprehensive recruitment and vetting are in place. All staff who are working with children are Garda vetted. Staff Handbook links to our Child Protection Policy. All staff complete a Safeguarding 1 Course. Induction Policy (which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policies and procedures) All formal education programmes must include supervision by one of the visiting school’s teachers at all times.
The child may be subject to harm from other children.	Staff Handbook links to our Child Protection Policy. Staff are present on all paid activities. Children under 16 must have an activity participation disclaimer form signed by an adult. Groups bookings are required to have an adult present All formal education programmes must include supervision by one of the visiting school’s teachers at all times.
Access to the activities.	All children under 16 years must have a disclaimer completed by a parent/guardian/group leader before participating in activities. Age/height restrictions are in place on all activities. School Tour forms and disclaimers ask for details of medical conditions.
Lost child may be subject to harm from the adult visitor	Staff communicate by walkie-talkies for quick tracking down of child/guardians. If approaching a suspected lost child, staff should comply with company Child Protection Policy. Staff Safeguarding training provided.
An independent adult traveller visiting Castlecomer Discovery Park uses the toilets at the same time as children participating in an education programme at the Centre	When a school group is in the park, a teacher or guardian will be asked to accompany children to the toilets



Procedures

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 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 maintaining a list of the persons in the service who are mandated persons
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person 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 and updated as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Castlecomer Discovery Park

Signed: _____

Cian Gill, Designated Relevant Person Under the Children's First Act 2015

For queries, please contact Designated Relevant Person



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