**Accora Orchestra Child Protection Policy**

1. **Child Protection Policy Statement**

We, **Accora Orchestra,** 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 will adhere to the recommendations of “Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of children”, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

* Code of conduct for all staff;
* Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse;
* Confidentiality;
* Recruitment and selecting staff (pending)
* Managing and supervising staff
* Involvement of parents/guardians;
* Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff
* Complaints procedure;
* Incidents and accidents

The Policy will be reviewed annually.

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(Designated Child Protection Officer)

Yvonne Chilton

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Code of Conduct for staff**

**Child- Centred Approach.**

* Treat all children and young people equally;
* Listen to and respect children and young people;
* Involve children and young people in decision- making, as appropriate;
* Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
* Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
* Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
* Offer constructive criticism when needed;
* Treat all children and young people as individuals;
* Respect a child’s or young person’s personal space;
* Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their parents/guardians;
* Agree group contract before beginning session;
* Encourage feedback from group;
* Use age appropriate teaching aids and materials;
* Lead by example;
* Be aware of a child’s or young person’s other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g. school or exams;
* Be cognisant of a child’s or young person’s limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
* Create an atmosphere of trust;
* Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

**Good Practice**

* Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
* Bring Child Protection Policy and Procedures to the attention of Parents/ Guardians, children/young people, visitors and facilitators;
* Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
* Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;
* Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
* Report any concerns to the Designated Person: Yvonne Chilton/Sara Parge and follow reporting procedures;
* Be aware of our Anti- Bullying Policy as outlined in our Code of Conduct for Members. Encourage members awareness of same policy and reporting of any bullying, concerns or worries;
* Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
* Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
* Avail of appropriate up skilling and training for teaching staff;
* Report and record any incidents and accidents in our Incident Book (available at desk every Friday night);
* Engage in updating and reviewing of policies and procedures which will take place at least bi-annually;
* Keep parents/ guardians informed of any issues that concern their children;
* Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved;
* Don’t be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don’t ‘do nothing’;
* Don’t let a problem get out of control;
* Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of parents/guardians;
* Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that parents/guardians are informed.
* Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

**Inappropriate behaviour**

* Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people;
* Don’t use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language;
* Don’t single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus or attention;
* Don’t allow /engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
* Don’t hit or physically chastise children/young people;
* Don’t socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g. outside of structured organisational activities.

**Physical contact**

* Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
* Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
* Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when correcting hand position on instrument.

**Health and safety**

* Don’t leave children unattended or unsupervised;
* Provide a safe environment;
* Be aware of accident procedures and follow accordingly.

**Reporting Procedures**

**Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare.**

Yvonne Chilton and Sara Parge have been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child’s or young person’s safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of this person to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardai where appropriate.

**Yvonne Chilton** can be contacted at Enagh Millhouse, Lisduff, Virginia, Co. Cavan.

046 9245905/087-9949006

**Sara Parge** has been designated as Deputy Designated Person

and can be contacted at 3 Dun Na Ri Lane, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan 087-7842430

The following excerpt from “Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2-p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

1. Specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
2. An account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;
3. Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
4. An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse( an example of this would be a pattern of injuries , an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour);
5. Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

**Recording Procedures.**

An incident book will be kept for recording concerns about the protection of children and young people.

It will be stored securely with Patricia Farrelly at above address.

Chairperson, artistic directors and teaching staff will have access to them.

Confidentiality shall be maintained according to our confidentiality statement.

Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people.

* Suspicions
* Concerns
* Worrying observations
* Behavioural changes
* Actions and outcomes.

**Dealing with disclosure**

* Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say;
* Don’t use leading questions or prompt details;
* Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret;
* Don’t make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily;
* Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age –appropriate)

**Reporting procedures**

* All details including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts should be recorded (for example in the incident book referred to above.) Any opinions should be supported by facts;
* Inform the Designated Person or her deputy if unavailable.
* The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with parents/guardians. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/ young person at further risk.
* The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
* Information shall be shared on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis.
* If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Duty Social worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive. Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the health Service Executive without delay.
* If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive without delay.
* In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardai. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardai.

**Area Social Work Department** : Child and Family Services 049-4377305/06

HSE Drumalee

Cootehill Road

Cavan

**Duty Social Worker of HSE** : Deirdre Horan-Martin T:047-30470

M:087-9672724

HSE,N.E.A. Cavan/Monaghan

Old Rooskey Offices

Rooskey

Monaghan

E-Mail: [deirdrem.horanmartin@maile.hse.ie](mailto:deirdrem.horanmartin@maile.hse.ie)

1. **Confidentiality Statement**

We, Accora Orchestra are committed to ensuring peoples’ rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

* Information will only be forwarded on a ‘need to know’ basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
* Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
* We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;
* Parents/guardians, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
* Images of a child /young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/guardian (however we cannot guarantee that camera /videos will not be used at public performances)

Please see our Code of ethics regarding photography/video and accompanying consent form.

* Procedures will be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

1. **Recruitment and selection of staff.**

To date all our teachers have come up through the ranks of the organisation and have successfully completed relevant teaching diplomas.

All have successfully completed Garda Vetting.

As we have not recruited from outside the organisation we are presently consulting with **P.J. Carolan and Co., Solicitors, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan.** They are assisting us with legal advice in developing our policy and procedures in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of staff.

1. **Managing and Supervising Staff**

To protect staff and children/young people, we undertake that new Staff will:

* Take part in a mandatory induction training session;
* Be made aware of the organisation’s Code of Conduct, Child Protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
* Undergo a probationary or trial period.

All staff will:

* Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
* Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
* Be provided with child protection training.

1. **Involvement of parents/ Guardians.**

We are committed to being open with all parents/guardians.

We undertake to:

* Advise Parents/guardians of our child protection policy;
* Inform parents/guardians and schools of all activities and potential activities.
* We will use the following means of communication; written notes, text a parent, newsletter, website and social media (facebook);
* We will issue contact/consent forms where relevant;
* Operate child- centred policies in accordance with best practice.
* Develop and formulate specific recruitment guidelines;
* Ensure as far as possible that activities are age-appropriate;
* Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parents/guardians where appropriate.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

* Respond to the needs of the child/young person;
* Inform parents/guardians on an ongoing basis unless this action puts the child/young person at further risk;
* Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in case of emergency, the Gardai;
* In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child /young person and inform parents/guardians as appropriate.

As a child centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child / young person first. To that end we will:

* Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardai where there is a child protection welfare concern;
* Encourage parents/guardians to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
* Have a designated contact person available for consultation with parents/guardians in case of any concern over a child or young person’s welfare.

1. **Dealing with allegations against staff.**

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person **Yvonne Chilton** will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made **Yvonne Chilton** will deal with issues related to the staff member.

* The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk.
* If complaints are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated person should be contacted;
* The reporting procedures outlined in Point 3 of these guidelines should be followed. Both the parents/guardians and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age –appropriate manner;
* The staff member will be informed as soon as possible

. of the nature of the allegation

. the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond.

* The chairperson should be informed as soon as possible;
* Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí;
* After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

1. **Complaints and comments procedures.**

In the event of complaints or comments:

* Complaints or comments will be responded to within 2 weeks;
* **Yvonne Chilton** has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person.
* Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

1. **Accident’s procedure.**

We plan to formulate a Health and Safety Statement after conclusion of a risk assessment of each area of operation.

**Accident’s procedure.**

* The organisation will maintain an up to date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in organisation;
* Children/young people’s details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
* External organisations with whom we have dealings with must provide proof of that they have public liability insurance;
* First –aid boxes shall be available (location staff room in school where rehearsals occur);
* All staff should be made aware of location of accident/incident report book which will be kept at the desk every Friday evening and then securely stored.
* First aid will be in accordance with our Health and Safety Guidelines.
* We will be aware of our responsibility for first aid on off–site trips.