

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of service being provided: Victim Support at Court

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

Victim Support at Court (V-SAC) specialises in court accompaniment for victims of crime, including children and adults at risk, their family and friends and prosecution witnesses when they attend court.

V-SAC currently operates in the Dublin, Eastern, South Eastern and North Tipperary criminal courts. V-SAC has 3 paid staff – the General Manager and two Volunteer Coordinators.

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| General Manager: | Dympna Kenny | 087-288-5521 |
| CCJ Volunteer Coordinator: | Sara Murphy | 085-878-0838 |
| Regional Coordinator: | Niamh Lambert | 085-860-7739 |

Victim Support at Court
Aras Ui Dhalaigh
The Four Courts
Inns Quay
Dublin 7

01-872-6785
www.vsac.ie

Victim Support at Court provides practical and emotional support for victims and witnesses of any types of crime who are under the age of 18 and who are attending court for criminal proceedings.

V-SAC complies with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

3. Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. 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 |
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| 1 | Allegation of abuse/misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service | V-SAC Employee and Volunteer Handbooks clearly outline the procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child |

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| | | <p>availing of our service. It is V-SAC's policy that all persons under 18 must have a responsible adult with them when attending court. This ensures that V-SAC staff/volunteers are never alone with a child.</p> |
| 2 | Recruitment | <p>V-SAC's Employee Handbook clearly outlines the procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers. V-SAC complies with the provisions of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016. All V-SAC staff are Garda Vetted during their probationary period. All volunteers are Garda Vetted on successful completion of the Volunteer Training Programme.</p> |
| 3 | Child Protection Concern - Training | <p>V-SAC provides ongoing child protection training to all staff and volunteers to raise awareness within the organisation about any potential risks to a child's safety and welfare. All staff and volunteers are made aware of their duty to report concerns or disclosures of abuse in the course of their duties to the V-SAC Designated Liaison Person.</p> |
| 4 | Reporting Child Protection concerns from staff/volunteers | <p>The role and responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person are outline in the Employee Handbook. The Reporting Child Protection Concern Form is in the Employee Handbook and Volunteer Handbook. This needs to be completed by the staff/volunteer. Failure to do so is a failure in duty of care and can lead to disciplinary action. If the Designated Liaison Person is not available, the Child Protection Officer can be contacted. The roles and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer are available in the Employee Handbook. The Designated Liaison Person acts as a resource for staff/volunteers regarding child protection concerns. As defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns that reach a particular threshold to TUSLA. All V-SAC policies and procedures are available on request.</p> |
| 5 | Reporting child protection concerns to TUSLA | <p>V-SAC Employee Handbook clearly outlines the procedures for reporting child protection concerns to TUSLA. The V-SAC Child Safeguarding Statement is provided to all staff and volunteers and any other person involved with the service. The Child Safeguarding Statement is also published on V-SAC's website www.vsac.ie . The</p> |

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| | | Child Protection Statement and policies are available to guardians, parents on request and a copy of these made available to TUSLA on request. |
| 6 | Confidentiality | All V-SAC staff, volunteers, board members and students are required to sign a confidentiality agreement on commencement with V-SAC. |
| 7 | Record keeping | V-SAC keeps all data securely locked away, in line with GDPR. V-SAC only records very limited data in relation to its service users, including children and vulnerable adults. |
| 8 | Working in Partnership: Joint working | V-SAC will work in partnership with any other agency/service when such a partnership will benefit the child and their family. This includes statutory and non-statutory services. V-SAC is committed to sharing information in relation to child protection with TUSLA Child and Family Agency to liaise in the best interest of the child. V-SAC will share what is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case. This is in keeping with the principles of GDPR which recognises in certain circumstances information can be shared in the interest of child protection. |
| 9 | Physical injury to a child | Children remain under adult supervision at all times within the courthouse and are not left unattended. The procedure for dealing with any accident or injury to a child are outlined in the Employee and Volunteer Handbooks. |

4. 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 (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;

- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

5. 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 on **25th May 2023**, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: 
Dympna Kenny
General Manager

Victim Support at Court
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The Four Courts
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For queries, please contact **Dympna Kenny**, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.

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