


**Policy**

**Title: Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy & Procedures**

| Document No. | Version | Status   | Effective Date |
|--------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| POL-01       | 03      | Approved | 03/09/2021     |

**Document Approvals**

| Approver | Print Name   | Signature  | Date       |
|----------|--------------|--|------------|
|          | Fran Crowell |  | 09/03/2021 |

**1.0 Objective**

The purpose of this document is to describe the Remember Us policy and procedure associated with the Protection of Young People/Vulnerable Adults.

**2.0 Scope**

The scope of the document applies to all The Board of Directors, All Employees and Volunteers of Remember Us.

**3.0 Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of Remember Us to have a policy in place to describe the Protection of Young People/Vulnerable Adults.

It is the responsibility of The Board of Directors, All Employees and Volunteers of Remember Us to ensure they have read and understand the policy herein.

**4.0 Policy**

**INTRODUCTION**

Remember Us is an integrated social group for young people/vulnerable adults with special needs, their families and friends. Our aim is to provide an integrated social environment for young people/vulnerable adults to learn, form relationships and above all to have fun. It provides support and information for parents, carers and family members and helps young people/vulnerable adults develop their social, personal and life skills, self-esteem and quality of life.

Remember Us used the term 'young person/vulnerable adult' rather than 'child' throughout our Policies/Guidelines/Procedures to describe our members and participants

This Policy conforms to the guidelines contained in:

Children First Guidance 2017

Children First Act 2015

[https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/Children\\_First\\_A4.pdf](https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/Children_First_A4.pdf)

The policy intent is that the legislation will operate side-by-side with the existing non-statutory obligations provided for in Children First:

- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

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which are additional key pieces of complementary legislation designed to improve child safety and protection.

Children First: National Guidance outlines that all organisations working with children and young people should create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children and young people availing of their services. Most of these organisations will provide 'relevant services' as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and will have specific statutory obligations under the Act. The Guidance also outlines best practice procedures in child safeguarding that all organisations dealing with children and young people should consider. This is in addition to any statutory obligations under the Act. Set out below are statutory obligations of relevant services and Safeguarding Best Practice Procedures for all organisations.

Statutory obligations of relevant services:

The Children First Act 2015 places specific obligations on organisations which provide services to children and young people, including the requirement to:

- Keep children safe from harm while they are using the service
- Carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while availing of the service
- Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified
- Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.

**MANDATED AND DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON**

**The Role of the Mandated Person**

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015:

- To report harm of children, above a defined threshold, to Tusla
- To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report

The mandated person, under the legislation is 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. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

**The Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

The DLP is a resource available to any staff member or volunteer who has a young person/vulnerable adult protection concern. The designated liaison person is responsible for:

- Ensuring that reporting procedures within your organisation are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Co-Ordinate and liaise with TUSLA on young people/vulnerable adult's protection issues.

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- Ensure that individual case records are maintained, and a record of any action taken by Remember Us and the liaison with other agencies is also maintained.
- Maintain a working knowledge about Child Protection Issues.
- Ensure that the Remember Us Child Protection Policy is followed when dealing with young people/vulnerable adult protection concerns.
- Refer all applicable training needs of staff/volunteers to the attention of the management team.

**Remember Us Designated Liaison Person:**

| <b>NAME</b>           | <b>CONTACT DETAILS</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Alison Donohoe</b> | <b>0876556583</b>      |

**Remember Us Nominated Persons:**

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Nora Roban</b> | <b>086 0457003</b> |
| <b>Anne Drumm</b> | <b>086 0457003</b> |

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**4.1 Policy Statement**

Young people /vulnerable adults with disabilities are children first and are as vulnerable to abuse as other young people /vulnerable adults. They have the same right to protection as other children. In accessing services and activities provided by Remember Us, young people/vulnerable adults have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to develop good appropriate working relationships with employees and volunteers.

Remember Us is committed to ensuring that young people/vulnerable adults experience services and activities free from harm and abuse, therefore all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that they understand and comply with the requirements set out in this policy. Remember Us recognises that young people/vulnerable adults accessing services may be experiencing or have experienced harm or abuse. It is important that staff know what to do if there is a child protection concern. This document also provides clear reporting guidelines and procedure should staff become aware of a young person/vulnerable adult protection concern.

**Core Values**

Every individual with Remember Us should at all times show respect and understanding for young person's/vulnerable adult's rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of Remember Us and the guidelines contained in this document.

The work of Remember Us is based on the principles that will guide the development of young people/vulnerable adults within the organisation. Young people's/Vulnerable Adult's experience should be guided by what is best for them. The stages of development and the ability of the young person/vulnerable adult should guide the types of activity provided within the organisation. Staff members and volunteers working with young people/vulnerable adults should have a basic understanding of the various needs of children/vulnerable adults. Any form of physical, neglect, emotional or sexual abuse of young people/vulnerable adults by another child/employee/volunteer is totally unacceptable. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that their colleagues abide by the guidance set out in this policy.

If a staff member or volunteer has a concern that a colleague may have abused a young people/vulnerable adults adult either intentionally or unintentionally, they must report their concerns in accordance with the reporting procedure in this document.

It must also be acknowledged that young people/vulnerable adults may experience harm or abuse from someone in the community, this may be a family member, neighbour or a worker from another organisation. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that these concerns are reported in accordance with the reporting procedure set out in this document.

This document sets out behaviours that are acceptable and appropriate in working with young people/vulnerable adults and should underpin all work in services and activities.

**Integrity in Relationships**

Staff members/Volunteers interacting with young people/vulnerable adults within Remember Us must do so with integrity and respect. There is a danger that some situations can be used to exploit or undermine children/vulnerable adults. All actions within Remember Us should be guided by what is

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best for the young person/vulnerable adult and in the context of quality and open working relationships.

**Quality atmosphere and ethos**

All activities should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A person-centred ethos will help to ensure that all activities are kept in their appropriate place. Too often, demands are placed on people too early and can result in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout can be the end result.

**Equality**

All persons should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. People with limited mobility should be involved in any activity that is suitable for them allowing them to participate to their potential alongside others.

**Fair Play**

Fair play is the guiding principle of Remember Us's ethos. All activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed, to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and promotes playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving.

**Fun and Competition**

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of all participants, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, often competitive demands are placed too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure. Everyone should aim to put the welfare of all participants' first and competitive standards second.

**Smoking**

It is not appropriate for Remember Us employees or volunteers to be smoking with or in front of young people/vulnerable adults when they are in their care.

**4.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to:

- Affirm the Remember Us commitment to providing appropriate and safe activities and services to young people/vulnerable adults.
- Provide guidance for staff and volunteers on good practise in the provision of services and activities.
- Raise awareness of employees and volunteers of what harm and abuse is.
- Provide guidelines and reporting procedures for reporting allegations, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.

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**4.3 Responsibility**

This policy is applicable to all Remember Us staff members and volunteers and sets out good practise guidelines. Staff members/Volunteers should fully understand their roles and have a clear understanding of the relationship between themselves and young people/vulnerable adults.

The implementation of good practise creates a good environment for young people/vulnerable adults to express themselves safely and in doing so they may learn new skills, make friends, develop good appropriate relationships with staff members and volunteers and hopefully enjoy the experience. Mutual respect, trust, honesty and openness are fundamental to a healthy relationship between a volunteer and a young person/vulnerable adult. This unique relationship, whereby adults and young people/vulnerable adults voluntarily come together to learn and to share values, deserves the utmost support and protection.

Staff members/Volunteers should ensure that their actions and behaviour is appropriate at all times. Failure to do so may result in a concern or suspicion of abuse. This is a matter of using common sense and of being open, as distinct from being secretive, in their dealings with children/vulnerable adults.

Furthermore, all staff members and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of policies, guidelines and procedures for safe working practises;
- Treat young people/vulnerable adults with dignity and respect;
- Listen to young people/vulnerable adults when they are expressing a concern;
- Attend child protection training as required by the Remember Us;
- Report child protection concerns in accordance with this policy.

**4.4 Policies for Good Practise for Staff members/Volunteers**

Remember Us wishes to provide the best possible environment for all persons involved in the organisation and to provide enjoyable, safe opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. All persons involved in Remember Us have rights which must be respected.

**4.4.1 Ratio of Employees and Volunteers to children/Vulnerable Adults**

Ensure there is always an adequate adult to young person/vulnerable to adult ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age and needs of the participants.

**Working with groups of children.**

When working with groups of children there should be a minimum of 2 staff members/volunteers present with a ratio of 2:8. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances and the needs of the participants, safety and other specific circumstances such as mobility and care needs. Programme content may require these ratios to be considerably lower.

**Gender balance.**

In a single gender group, it is recommended that one staff member/volunteer, at least, is of the same gender at the participants. In a mixed group it is our policy to endeavour to reflect ratio male/female employees/volunteers to the ratio of male and female participants taking into account the personal care tasks that need to be done.

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**4.4.2 Operation of Programmes for Children/Vulnerable Adults**

In the operation of Remember Us programmes, staff members and volunteers should at all times:

- Put in place a sign-in/sign-out system for participants to record attendance, dates, times and venues at any club/event/session (the content of all such sessions should also be noted).
- Take note of any Health & Safety issues/risks specific to the venue, note escape routes and emergency exits.
- Use language that is appropriate to the age and ability of the young person/vulnerable adult.
- Ensure that programme content and materials are appropriate to the age, ability and maturity of the young person/vulnerable adult.
- Avoid using content and materials that are not conducive to the positive healthy development of young people/vulnerable adults, e.g. issues of violence or subversion.
- Inform parent/guardians of all activities.
- All records regarding working with young people/vulnerable adults should be stored in a safe place.
- In working with young people/vulnerable adults ensure that all aspects of the activity are well prepared taking into account safety, fun, ability participants and any other issues that need to be covered.

**4.5 Policy for Appropriate Physical Contact/Communication with children/vulnerable adults.**

Inappropriate physical contact with young persons/vulnerable adults must be avoided at all times. Any discomfort or resistance on the part of the young person/vulnerable adult should be respected.

Staff members/volunteers need to be aware that even the most informal physical gestures, e.g. putting a hand on a shoulder or arm, could be misconstrued by a young person/vulnerable adult or an observer, especially if they are continually repeated with the same person. Discretion and good judgement must be used at all times with regard to necessary physical contact in some activities including:

- Personal Care Tasks, Swimming, Coaching e.g. crafts, sports, photography, etc. First Aid and games.
- Intervening in a physical fight between young people/vulnerable adults.
- When a young person/vulnerable adult greets with a hug/hand shake.

Staff members and volunteers should be aware of the particular conditions within which appropriate physical contact could properly take place, for example:

- In open view, e.g. with at least one other adult present
- When the young person/vulnerable adult is clearly informed of the process to be followed and freely gives their permission and is in accordance with the service that is being provided.

Physical restraint must not be used, except in circumstances where such force is the only means of protecting a young person/vulnerable adult or adult from injury.

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**4.6 Guidelines for Personal Care**

When performing personal care tasks on behalf of a young person/vulnerable adult it is imperative that it is carried out in such a way that the risk of the person being abused is eliminated.

- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the young person/vulnerable adult and not the adult in charge.
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant – avoid doing something that a young person/vulnerable adult can do for themselves.
- Never engage in inappropriate touching.
- Ensure there are adequate employees/volunteers in place to eliminate the risk of abuse taking place.
- Always make sure that 2 staff/volunteers accompany members when going to toilet or if they need to go out for air. This is to ensure safety of staff/volunteers against “false allegations”.
- All personal care provided to young people/vulnerable adults must be well planned out and documented before the service is provided. Remember Us Volunteers must always be accompanied by at least one other volunteer when assisting a young person/vulnerable adult.

**4.7 Guidelines for Challenging or Disruptive Behaviour**

Disruptive behaviour involves consistent patterns of behaviours that “break the rules”.

Young people/Vulnerable Adults of all ages break some rules, especially less important ones. This behaviour is a normal part of growing up. Situations may arise where the behaviour of a participant is routinely challenging or disruptive and may cause harm to them or other young people/vulnerable adults. It is recommended that in instances of challenging or disruptive behaviour which require the intervention of the staff member/volunteer and which put at risk the safety and well-being of the young person/vulnerable adult or other participants, the following steps could be taken:

- The staff member/volunteer who knows the young person/vulnerable adult at the centre of the behaviour should approach the young person/vulnerable adult and try to convince them to stop the behaviour.
- In a group setting if the behaviour persists the young person/vulnerable adult could be taken out of the group/activity brought to one side, following good practise guidelines for one to one work with young people/vulnerable adults and helped to deal with whatever is causing the problem.
- It may be appropriate for the young person/vulnerable adult to return to the group/activity once the problem has been resolved.
- It may also be appropriate for the young person/vulnerable adult to go home and if so the parents/guardians must be notified immediately.
- Depending on the nature of the incident the rest of the participants involved in the group/activity may need to discuss their reactions to the behaviour. This must be considered and if necessary, discussed with their parents/guardians.
- In all cases parents/guardians must be made aware of instances of challenging or disruptive behaviour that their young person/young people/vulnerable adults have expressed.
- It may be necessary for Remember Us Board of Directors to issue a letter detailing specific instruction to staff and volunteers on how instances of challenging, disruptive, or aggressive



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behaviour of an individual member could be avoided and handled if an incident should occur. Such letter could contain information on trigger words or actions to be avoided and if an incident should arise, instruction on how the individual should be or not be approached.

- Such incidents will be investigated and reviewed in consultation with volunteers, parents/carers of the member involved and the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis and a letter issued to volunteers as appropriate.

**Recording Challenging or Disruptive Behaviour**

Remember Us guidelines require that serious instances of disruptive behaviour which necessitate the intervention of a staff member/volunteer be documented in the Remember Us Accident/Incident Report Book. This Incident Report Book should be available to Remember Us Board of Directors and where necessary, in confidence to other staff members/volunteers involved with the particular group. The written report should describe:

- The programme running at the time
- What happened and who was involved
- Where and when it happened
- What was said, if significant
- Any injury to person[s] or property
- How the situation was resolved and what the staff member/volunteer did to bring about its resolution
- Any follow-up or consequences to the situation
- This report of the incident should be made available to the parents/guardians.

Accident/Incident Reports must be signed by the reporting staff member/volunteer and, where possible, signed by a witness/team leader.

**4.8 Guidelines for ensuring safety & managing risk**

Procedures are in place for eliminating risks and if they can't be eliminated steps are taken to reduce the identified risks and monitored on an ongoing basis.

All services to children/vulnerable adults must:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants;
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants;
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians and have them to hand at all times particularly on day trips/outings;
- Ensure Personal Protective Equipment is used;
- Be familiar with and adhere to the Remember Us Medication Management Policy when dealing with medication;
- Ensure that a fully stocked First Aid Kit is close at hand with access to a qualified first-aider;
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services;
- Know the Remember Us contact number (086 0457003);
- Know the contact details for Designated Liaison Officer;
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have an emergency plan;

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- If an accident occurs Remember Us's Accident Form should be filled out recording the problem/action/outcome [Appendix 3]. Contact the participant's parents and keep them informed of all details;
- All persons should ensure that the good conduct of the game/activity is maintained;
- Participants should know and keep the rules of their sport/activity, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety;
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all activities;
- Ensure parents/guardians are informed of finishing time and are present at the appropriate finishing time.

#### 4.9 Guidelines for Particular Situations of Risk

Staff members/volunteers need to be aware of particular situations and environments where young people/vulnerable adults are more vulnerable to abuse and where allegations of child abuse are more likely to occur. This section covers points of good practice that need to be considered to provide a safe environment for young people/vulnerable adults, employees, staff and volunteers.

##### 4.9.1 Meetings with Young Persons/Vulnerable Adults

Many times, young people/vulnerable adults will seek to confide with a person outside of their family supports and this can be a regular part of working with young people/vulnerable adults in informal/social settings. This can be a very rewarding experience for a young person/vulnerable adult and an employee/staff member/volunteer as the young person/vulnerable adult can discuss aspects of their life which can be very serious or just regular issues that they have on their mind.

Employees/staff members/volunteers should be aware of the potential risks which may arise from meetings with individual young people/vulnerable adults or a small group of young people/vulnerable adults. Where possible;

- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others (2 persons visible always).
- Such meetings should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room/area where at least 2 people are nearby.
- Employees/staff members/volunteers should advise another adult that such a meeting is taking place and the reason for it. A record should be kept of participants present, dates, times and content of such meetings.
- Employees/staff members/volunteers are **strongly advised** to avoid meetings with individual children/vulnerable adults where they are on their own in a building
- Employees/staff members/volunteers cannot offer confidentiality and must advise a disclosing young person/vulnerable adult of this. We cannot offer to keep secrets.

##### 4.9.3 Travelling with Children/Vulnerable Adults

There is extra responsibility taken on by all persons when they travel with young people/vulnerable adults. When travelling with young people/vulnerable adults, employees/staff members/volunteers should;

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure that all transport is fitted with safety equipment (e.g. individual seat belts and is wheelchair accessible with appropriate hoist and safety clamps if needed).

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- Ensure that all safety equipment including seat belts, clamps etc are used as appropriate.

**4.10 Guidelines for Family Respite/Day Trips Away**

The following guidelines are put in place to assist Remember Us staff members/volunteers to facilitate the organisation of a trip involving overnight stays away from home for young people/vulnerable adults. The guidelines are designed to maximise the enjoyment, learning opportunities and safety of those involved. Please note that these guidelines also apply to any overnight activity that may involve young people/vulnerable adults staying awake for the duration.

**Checklist for residential trips away**

The following checklist acts as a guide for staff members/volunteers who are involved in organising residential trips away for young people/vulnerable adults.

It is recommended that these are used to ensure a best practise approach for these trips and to minimise the risk to children/vulnerable adults and the persons working with them. The checklist has been split into four categories:

**Planning and Documentation**

- Ensure consent forms are signed and received from parents/guardians prior to departure.
- Ensure you have adequate Remember Us insurance cover for the trips and activities involved.
- Ensure that all staff members/volunteers have received the necessary training to match the duties they will be carrying out i.e. Manual Handling, Hoist, etc.
- The Staff person will act as the leader of the overall group and will have final decision making authority during the trip. In his/her absence a nominee will be appointed to this role.

**Accommodation**

- Check health and safety issues relating to the accommodation such as emergency evacuation for upstairs rooms, accessibility of rooms and corridors for mobility of the participants.
- Ensure all staff members/volunteers have a rooming list.
- Hold a briefing with all Remember Us staff/volunteers to share the health and safety relating to the venue/accommodation.

**Preparing participants & programme**

- Prepare an information pack for participants including the programme of activities, emergency information if necessary
- For air travel it may be necessary to use manual wheelchairs rather than power chairs. This needs to be discussed with families well in advance of travelling.
- Communications with parents/guardians and participants is useful to inform of travel details, accommodation details, other activities, special requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. This can take the form of meetings or written correspondence.

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**Documents to bring on the trip**

- Details of travel insurance for foreign trips
- Tickets, passports and relevant travel documents e.g. visas
- Accommodation details
- Relevant emergency numbers
- List of medications (in case medication gets lost or mislaid).

**4.11 Guidelines on the use of Photographic, Mobile Phone and Filming Equipment**

Remember Us recognises the concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to young people/vulnerable adults through the use of photographs on social media, websites and other publications. Where possible Remember Us will avoid the use of the name of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside Remember Us.

Remember Us seeks written parental/guardian consent for the use of photography and video (appendix 4).

Remember Us requests parents/guardians to retain mobile phones with cameras/internet access/social media apps when young people/vulnerable adults undertake activities; this measure is to protect participant's privacy. Remember Us staff members/volunteers may temporarily store such devices in safekeeping for the duration of activities/events. Parents/guardians may request a young person/vulnerable adult retain their phone at activities/events in cases where communication is necessary.

**4.12 Dignity and Respect among Young people/Vulnerable Adults**

Remember Us is dedicated to implementing and promoting measures to protect the right of all individuals to be treated with dignity and respect at all times and is committed to ensuring that all are provided with a safe environment which is free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

**4.13 Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Protection Guideline**

Anyone with a Child Protection concern should inform the Leader/Staff member at an event and/or activity, who will escalate the concern to the Designated Liaison Person The relevant contact details should be displayed at all events on our printed Safeguarding Statement.

**4.13.1 What is Abuse?**

There are several categories of Young person/Vulnerable person abuse:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse.

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A young person/vulnerable adult may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the young person/vulnerable adult or a stranger, and can be an adult, or another young person/vulnerable adult.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the young person/vulnerable adult and may have serious long-term negative consequences. Neglect occurs when a young person/vulnerable adult does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the young person/vulnerable adult is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a young person/vulnerable adult's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the young person/vulnerable adult having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the young person/vulnerable adult's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the young person/vulnerable adult's life as well as the age of the young person/vulnerable adult and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

The following are features of neglect:

- Young person/vulnerable adult being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding;
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a young person/vulnerable adult not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation;
- Failure to provide adequate care for the young person/vulnerable adult's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation;
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture;
- Lack of adequate clothing;
- Inattention to basic hygiene;
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the young person/vulnerable adult's age;
- Persistent failure to attend school;
- Abandonment or desertion.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a young person/vulnerable adult. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and development as compared to that which could be expected of a similar young person/vulnerable adult.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a young person/vulnerable adult who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his/her needs met for supervision or safety. A young person/vulnerable adult whose ongoing failure to gain weight or whose height is significantly below average may be deprived of adequate nutrition. A young person/vulnerable adult who consistently misses school may be deprived of intellectual stimulation. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the young

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person/vulnerable adult's needs are neglected to the extent that his/her wellbeing and/or development are severely affected e.g. excessive body odour and/or inappropriate clothing.

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a young person/vulnerable adult as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a young person/vulnerable adult. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a young person/vulnerable adult's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of young people/vulnerable adults are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their young person/vulnerable adult's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the young people/vulnerable adults welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the young person/vulnerable adult and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

Rejection

- Lack of comfort and love;
- Lack of attachment;
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play);
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned);
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement;
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the young person/vulnerable adult;
- Bullying;
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a young person/vulnerable adult depends on his or her behaviours or actions;
- Extreme overprotectiveness;
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking young person/vulnerable adult in bedroom);
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence;
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a young person/vulnerable adult relative to his/her age and stage of development.

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A young person/vulnerable adult may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

**Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a young person/vulnerable adult physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A

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reasonable concern exists where the young person/vulnerable adult's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment;
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- Pushing, shaking or throwing;
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- Use of excessive force in handling;
- Deliberate poisoning;
- Suffocation;
- Fabricated/induced illness;
- Female genital mutilation.

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a young person/vulnerable adult. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a young person/vulnerable adult cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a young person/vulnerable adult in the same way as they do to an adult.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a young person/vulnerable adult is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the young person/vulnerable adult to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Young person/vulnerable adult sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Young person/vulnerable adult sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the young person/vulnerable adult or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of young person/vulnerable adult sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a young person/vulnerable adult.
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a young person/vulnerable adult's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a young person/vulnerable adult or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a young person/vulnerable adult, whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- Sexual exploitation of a young person/vulnerable adult, which includes:



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- Inviting, inducing or coercing a young person/vulnerable adult to engage in prostitution or the production of pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
- Inviting, coercing or inducing a young person/vulnerable adult to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
- Showing sexually explicit material to young person/vulnerable adult, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a young person/vulnerable adult to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a young person/vulnerable adult will be considered within the wider objective of young person/vulnerable adult welfare and protection. The safety of the young person/vulnerable adult is paramount and at no stage should a young person/vulnerable adult's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

**Other forms of abusive behaviour towards Young People/Vulnerable Adults**

Apart from the above very serious forms of abuse, employees/staff members/volunteers should also be on the alert for other forms of behaviour that may be harmful to young people/vulnerable adults. The following behaviours are unacceptable among young people/vulnerable adults and employees/staff members/volunteers and have been taken from the Department of Education Code of Good Practise Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector.

**Verbal Abuse**

This can include name calling, sarcasm and criticism, making reference to some physical characteristic, destructive criticism, derogatory remarks and gestures.

**Bullying**

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, emotional or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. Bullying is a behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and can occur mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs, and other organisations working with young person/vulnerable adult. It includes behaviours such as;

- Teasing/taunting/threatening/hitting
- Extortion behaviour by one or more children against a target person e.g. Social Network websites

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**Who should deal with bullying?**

Extreme forms of bullying may be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and it must be dealt with by the Designated Liaison Person in line with Remember Us Policies.

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology, such as the use of cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass, threaten or intimidate someone.

**Organised abuse**

Child abuse can occur in a number of ways, including organised abuse. This occurs when one person moves into an area/institution and systematically entraps young person/vulnerable adult for abusive purposes [mainly sexual] or when two or more adults conspire to similarly abuse young person/vulnerable adult using inducements.

**Peer abuse**

In some cases of abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a young person/vulnerable adult. In these situations, the Young person/vulnerable adult Protection Procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the abuser. If there is any conflict of interest between the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance.

**Unwelcome behaviour**

This can include favouritism, exclusion, sexual harassment and sexual innuendo, humiliating and embarrassing others, deprivation of basic rights and harsh disciplinary regimes.

A young person/vulnerable adult may be abused or harmed in the community by someone known and trusted by them. This may be a relative, parent, neighbour or another child etc. A young person/vulnerable adult may be abused by a care worker or other person in a position of trust. It is important to remember that anyone can perpetrate abuse.

**Guidelines - dealing with a disclosure of abuse from a young person/vulnerable adult:**

- React calmly;
- Listen carefully and attentively;
- Take the young person/vulnerable adult seriously;
- Reassure the young person/vulnerable adult that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- Do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions;
- Check back with the young person/vulnerable adult that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser;
- Ensure that the young person/vulnerable adult understands that you must tell someone who understand this area and who can help;

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- Make a written record of what the young person/vulnerable adult has told you as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible;
- Tell the Leader/Staff member on duty who will escalate to the DLP/Nominated Person(s).
- Treat the information confidentially insofar as possible;
- Continue to support the young person/vulnerable adult.

**4.13.2 Procedure for Reporting Observed, Suspected, Alleged or Actual Abuse**

Any person who is concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a young person/vulnerable adult or receives an allegation of abuse should record their concerns/information and report the matter without delay to Remember Us Team Leader/staff member who will escalate to the Designated Liaison Person if appropriate.

**Procedure:**

- If there is an immediate or imminent physical danger to the young person/vulnerable adult, you should call the appropriate Emergency Service.
- Report the incident to the onsite Team Leader/Staff member. If the Team Leader/Staff member is not available you should contact Nora Roban or Anne Drumm at 086 0457003.
- The Team Leader/Staff member/Nominated Person(s) will contact the Remember Us Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Alison Donohoe by phone at 087 6556583 to report observed, suspected, alleged, or actual abuse.

*It is important to be aware that the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides civil immunity from civil liability to persons/organisations/groups who report child Abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the HSE or An Garda Siochana.*

**Procedure - Reporting allegations of abuse made against Remember Us workers/volunteers**

- Reports of allegations against Remember Us staff/volunteers must be made to the Mandated Person(s) listed below without delay;
- The Mandated Person will immediately inform Management of the report. The first priority is for the safety of the young person/vulnerable adult; management must ensure no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
- If the allegation fulfils the criteria for reporting to Tusla, this will be done as soon as possible, in conjunction with the DLP if appropriate;
- Parents/guardians will be informed by Remember Us of any action planned while having regard to the confidentiality rights of others, such as the person against whom the allegation has been made.

Mandated Person(s): Nora Roban, Anne Drumm,  
Contact telephone number: 086 0457003 (Nora, Anne)

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**Chairperson internal personnel procedures for dealing with the staff member/volunteer.**

In the context of an allegation of abuse against a staff member/volunteer, Remember Us disciplinary procedures aims to ensure that fair procedure is followed taking into account employment contract/volunteer agreement as well as the rules of natural justice.

The Chairperson may nominate a Board Director to manage this procedure at their discretion.

- In making an immediate decision about the staff member's/volunteer's presence in the organisation, the Chairperson will, as a matter of urgency take any measures necessary to protect the young person/vulnerable adult. These will be proportionate to the level of risk to the young person/vulnerable adult;
- Protective measures do not presume guilt.
- The Chairperson will privately inform the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him or her and the nature of the allegation.
- The staff member/volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Chairperson will note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla.
- The staff member/volunteer will be offered the option to have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.
- While Tusla will not provide advice on employment matters, advice and consultation with regard to risk to young people/vulnerable adults can be sought from the local Tusla social work office.
- The Chairperson will ensure that actions taken by Remember Us do not frustrate or undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. Remember Us will liaise closely with the investigating bodies to ensure this.
- The requirements of fair procedure and natural justice mean that Tusla usually will not share the detail of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a staff member /volunteer until they have had an opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions of Tusla.

**Erroneous allegations**

Staff members or volunteers working with young people/vulnerable adults may feel vulnerable to accusations of child abuse. Across the sector there may have been occasions when erroneous or untrue allegations have been made against staff/volunteers. This might have been because of misunderstandings or a genuine mistake.

Any allegation of abuse against a staff member/volunteer will be dealt with sensitively, and support provided by Remember Us for both the staff member and/or volunteer who allegedly abused a young person/ and the worker/employee/volunteer who reported the alleged abuse.

Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be ensured, any information relating to the allegation will be distributed within the guidelines and process detailed above.

**Whistle blowing** –a responsibility to speak out

Remember Us Staff members/volunteers should be aware of the appropriate authorities outside Remember Us to whom you should report if you are inhibited, for any reason, in reporting an incident internally or where you are dissatisfied with the internal response.

Staff members/volunteers may refer to the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

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**Concerns of Child Abuse**

An employee/staff member/volunteer may become concerned for the safety of a child/vulnerable adult in a number of circumstances;

- An employee/volunteer may witness abuse
- A third party informs the employee/volunteer of their concerns/suspicions regarding a young person/vulnerable adult
- A young person/vulnerable adult discloses to a third party who informs the employee/staff member/volunteer
- A young person/vulnerable adult discloses to an employee/staff member/volunteer that he/she is being abused
- An employee/volunteer may overhear other young person/vulnerable adult discussing their concerns about a particular incident, employee/volunteer or other young person/vulnerable adult
- The concerns of abuse may be about something that has happened in the past, present or a potential risk in the future
- An employee may receive information that suggests that a young person/vulnerable adult has, or is being abused by a parent or relative or someone else in the community, or an employee in another organisation.

**4.14 Role and Responsibilities of Parents**

It is the responsibility of parents/guardian's to bring young person/vulnerable adults to Remember Us programmes (unless otherwise stated). It is also the responsibility of parents to collect young person/vulnerable adults from programmes when they finish. Due consideration must be given to the staff/volunteers running the programme and therefore parents/guardians must ensure that young people/vulnerable adults arrive and are collected on time. While staff/volunteers are responsible for young people during the programmes organised by Remember Us, they are not responsible for them outside of said times.

**4.15 Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

It is essential that all child protection information within Remember Us and the information exchanged between TUSLA and An Garda Siochana is treated with the utmost confidentiality in order to safeguard the privacy of the young person/vulnerable adult adults and families concerned and to avoid prejudicing any subsequent legal proceedings. Young person/vulnerable adult protection information should only be shared with individuals who need to know and are involved in the reporting procedure for dealing with suspicions or allegations of young person/vulnerable adult abuse.

**4.16 Accidents**

It is the responsibility of all employees/staff members/volunteers to carry out their work safely, not to take unnecessary risks, and to be constantly vigilant to the possibility of accidents to themselves or others and to be aware of any hazards that may exist. There are added responsibilities when working

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with young person/vulnerable adults that employees/volunteers need to be aware of when dealing with an accident. These responsibilities are as follows;

- Parents/guardians must be notified of any accident/incident that occurs regardless of how small it may seem
- Record every Accident/incident that occurs in the Remember Us Accident/incident Book.
- Emergency numbers for parents/guardians and emergency services must be kept close to hand
- All employees/staff members/volunteers know what information will be needed to process a report of an accident.

**4.17 Safe Recruitment and Selection**

Many people who apply to work with community and voluntary organisations on either a voluntary or paid basis are interested, well-motivated and suitable for the various tasks involved. However, it is very important that Remember Us takes all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable and appropriately qualified people are recruited. Unfortunately, people with a tendency to young person/vulnerable adults can be attracted to the type of work that gives them opportunity to be with young people/vulnerable adults, and this always has to be borne in mind when recruiting/selecting employees/staff members/volunteers to work with young people/vulnerable adults.

All employees/staff members/volunteers taking responsibility for young people/vulnerable adults in Remember Us must undergo a recruitment process. This recruitment process is as follows;

- It is Remember Us Policy that the Garda Vetting process is carried out prior to commencement of duties. Remember Us Garda Vetting is processed through the National Youth Council of Ireland.
- Two references must be obtained, non-related, in writing and checked by Remember Us. These referees will be called for verification.
- It must be clear from the outset the type of factors which would exclude applicants, i.e. convictions against young people/vulnerable adults.
- Responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required must be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand. Please refer to Remember Us Volunteer Guidelines and Induction Pack.
- A probationary period must be outlined.

A good recruitment process will improve the chances that the right people are placed in the right positions while reducing risks of staff/volunteer allegations/suspicions/incidents of harm or abuse.

**4.18 Supervision and Support**

**Supervision**

It is very important that every effort be made to manage and support appointed employees/staff members/volunteers in their work with young people/vulnerable adults. It is important that all employees/staff members/volunteers have a mechanism to discuss any aspect of their work with young people/vulnerable adults.

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**Induction**

All employees/staff members/volunteers whether temporary or permanent must receive induction in all aspects of this Policy Document. This induction is mandatory and will be carried out with current and new employees/staff members/volunteers as they commence work with young people/vulnerable adults.

All employees/staff members/volunteers whether temporary or permanent, are required to sign up to this Policy Document. [See Appendix 6 – Policy Declaration Form].

**Training**

The Remember Us management team (in coordination with the Board) is responsible for co-ordinating the training needs of all employees/staff members/volunteers in relation to child protection and welfare. All employees/staff members/volunteers shall be offered child protection training which is provided from time to time. Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Protection Training is mandatory for volunteers/staff members and is also on offer to parents of young people/vulnerable adults within Remember Us.

**Garda Vetting**

Garda Vetting is carried by Remember Us through National Youth Council of Ireland via the e-vetting procedure and all volunteers/staff members working with young people/vulnerable adults must undergo this process. Parents are also encouraged to avail of the Garda Vetting Procedures prior to active participation in activities.

Junior Leaders must also be Garda Vetted through Remember Us once they have parental consent. This is a mandatory requirement for leadership engagement with any Remember Us activities and contact with young people/vulnerable adults.

**19. Policy Review**

This Policy will be reviewed in line with changes in national guidelines, and staff/volunteers will be notified of these changes.

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Board of Directors.

Enquiries, comments and queries are welcomed; these should be directed to Alison Donohoe, our Designated Liaison Person or the Management Team (Nora, Anne).

**5.0 References**

n/a

**6.0 Revisions**

| Version Number | Description of Revision  |
|----------------|--|
| 01             | First issuance of Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy & Procedures |
| 02             | 25/01/2020 - Second issuance following annual review – update contact details  |

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| 03 | 03/09/2021 - Third issuance following annual review – update 4.7 with information regarding letters which may be issued to volunteers following an incident of challenging behaviour and aggression. |
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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1**

**Remember Us  
Family Day Trips – Consent Form**



**Name of Project:** Remember Us

**Name of Person(s) attending trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of minder for trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone No. of minder for trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone No. of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that on all family day trips, the young people taking part will not be supervised by the organisers. The supervision and responsibility of these young people will be totally that of the above named minder or parent/guardian present on the trip.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**Appendix 2**

## Remember Us Medication Management Policy




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It is the policy of Remember Us not to administer any medication to young people/vulnerable adults on behalf of parents or legal guardians.

Every parent/legal guardian is responsible for the administration of medication to their own young person/vulnerable adult.

If your young person/vulnerable adult requires medication and they are involved in Remember Us activities, please feel free to call to the activities and administer medication.

**I agree to abide by the above policy.**

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**Appendix 3**

## Remember Us Accident/Incident Report Form




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What happened and who was involved?

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Where and When did incident/accident happen?

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Any injury to person(s) or property?

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What programme was running at the time?

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Who was present – leaders/staff?

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Witnesses:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**Appendix 4**

**Remember Us  
Photography & Video Consent  
Form**



If you give your consent, photographs or media coverage of the young person in your care, taken by a designated photographer for all club activities/ events, to promote Remember Us positively through the media, **may be used**.

- i.e. Remember Us website, local newspapers, newsletters, social media and scrapbooks.
- Parents/Carers/Legal guardians are only allowed to take photographs of club members and their families for their own personal historical prosperity
- The use of camera phones by parents/Carers/members or any invited guests are not permitted.
- While we endeavour to control the taking and use of photos on our closed club days we cannot control all photos taken while out in the public domain by those not related to Remember Us.

\*\*\*\*\*

**PLEASE RETURN THIS SECTION AND KEEP THE ABOVE INFORMATION**

PARENTS/CARERS CONSENT FORM FOR MEDIA /PHOTOGRAPHS

**I do give consent**, that photographs or media coverage of the young person in my care, taken by a designated photographer for all club activities/ events, to promote Remember Us positively through the media, **may be used**.

Please Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Sign Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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**I do NOT give consent**, that photographs or media coverage of the young person in my care, taken by a designated photographer for all club activities/ events, to promote Remember Us positively through the media, may be used.

Please Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Sign Name: \_\_\_\_\_

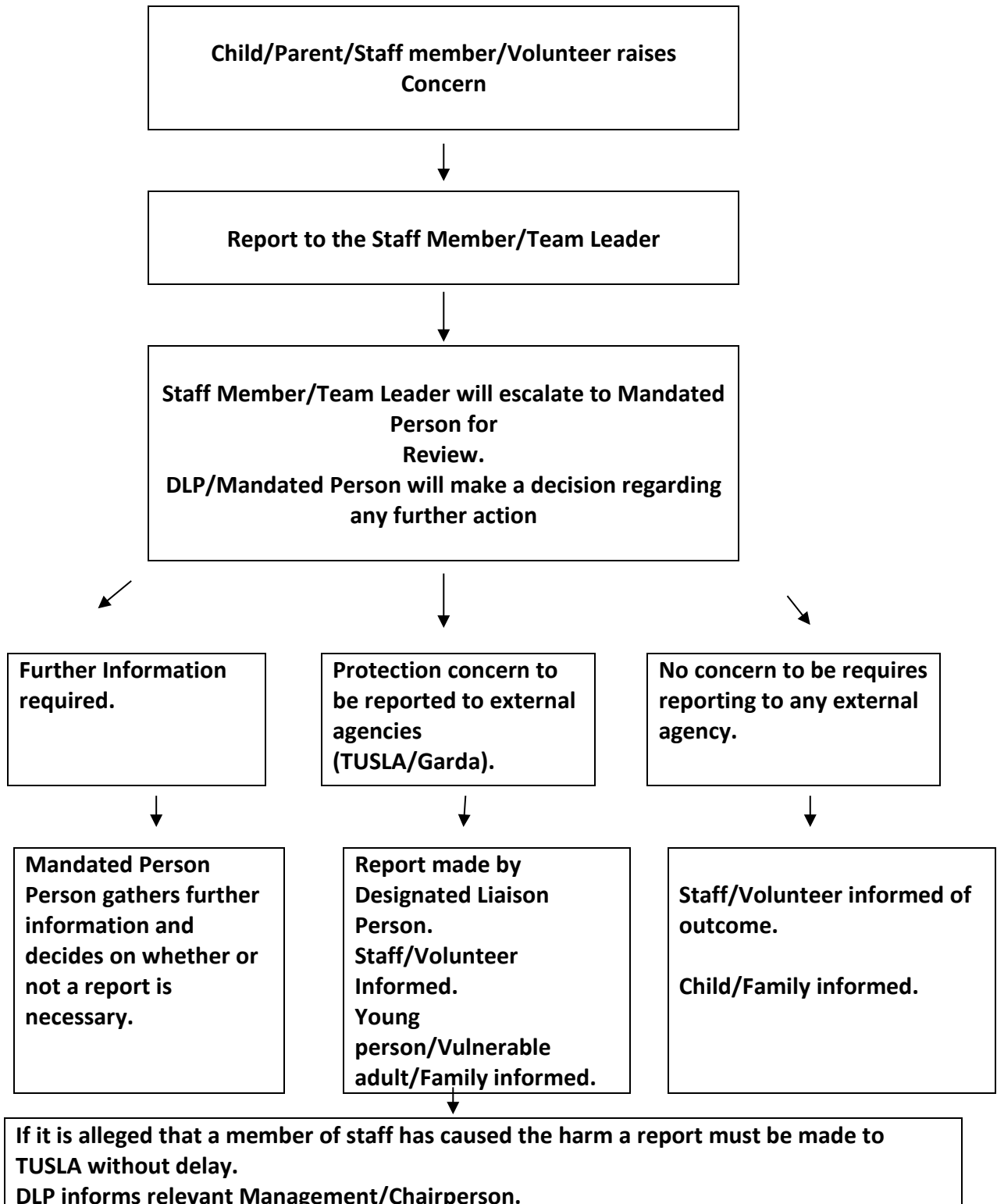
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix 5 - Flow Chart of the Protection Process.**



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**Appendix 6**

**Procedure - Responding to a young person/vulnerable adult who discloses abuse**

- A young person/vulnerable adult may disclose to a staff member/ volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Young people/Vulnerable adults will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child or young person hints at or tells a staff member/volunteer that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by another young person/vulnerable adult (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.
- Remember, a young person/vulnerable adult may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this.
- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the young person/vulnerable adult.
- Remember, the young person/vulnerable adult may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the young person/vulnerable adult has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the young person/vulnerable adult. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the young person/vulnerable adult person has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The young person/vulnerable adult quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore
- to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking with the young person/vulnerable adult
- It may be necessary to reassure the young person/vulnerable adult that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Reassure young person/vulnerable adult that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

**When asking questions**

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation



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**Confidentiality** - Do not promise to keep secrets.

At the earliest opportunity, tell the young person/vulnerable adult that:

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you.
- You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further on-going hurt.
- By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the young person/vulnerable adult you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything (or, indeed, anything) there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the young person/vulnerable adult's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the young person/vulnerable adult will return to you at another time.

**Think before you promise anything** – do not make promises you cannot keep

- At the earliest possible opportunity:
- Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the young person/vulnerable adult has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the young person/vulnerable person.
- Inform the DLP immediately and agree measures to protect the young person/vulnerable person, e.g. report the matter directly to Tusla
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

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**Appendix 7**

**Procedure - Responding to allegations of abuse made against or involving staff/volunteers**

An allegation of abuse may relate to any person who works with young people/vulnerable adults:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a young person/vulnerable adult;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a young person/vulnerable adult
- Behaved towards a young person/vulnerable adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a young person/vulnerable adult;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to Remember Us code of behaviour for workers and volunteers;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines.

If an allegation is made against a Remember Us staff member/volunteer you must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures, the rules of natural justice and any relevant employment law. Remember Us has a dual responsibility in respect of both the young person/vulnerable adult and the staff member/volunteer. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the young person/vulnerable adult and the alleged abuser;
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with the staff member/volunteer.

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**Appendix 8**

**Procedure - Reporting allegations of abuse made against Remember Us workers/volunteers to Tusla**

- Reports of allegations against Remember Us workers/volunteers must be made to the Designated Liaison Person or Chairperson without delay;
- The DLP or Chairperson (or designated Board Director) will immediately inform Management of the report.  
The first priority is for the safety of the young person/vulnerable adult; management must ensure no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
- If the allegation is judged to warrant reporting to Tusla, this will be done as soon as possible, in conjunction with the DLP if appropriate;
- Parents/guardians will be informed by Remember Us of any action planned while having regard to the confidentiality rights of others, such as the person against whom the allegation has been made.

Mandated Person(s): Nora Roben, Anne Drumm

Contact telephone number: 086 0457003 (Nora/Anne)

**Chairperson internal personnel procedures for dealing with the staff member/volunteer.**

In the context of an allegation of abuse against a staff member/volunteer, Remember Us disciplinary procedures aims to ensure that fair procedure is followed taking into account employment contract/volunteer agreement as well as the rules of natural justice.

- In making an immediate decision about the staff member's/volunteer's presence in the organisation, the Chairperson will, as a matter of urgency take any measures necessary to protect the young person/vulnerable adult. These will be proportionate to the level of risk to the young person/vulnerable adult;
- Protective measures do not presume guilt.
- The Chairperson will privately inform the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him or her and the nature of the allegation.
- The staff member/volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Chairperson should will note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla.
- The staff member/volunteer will be offered the option to have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.
- While Tusla will not provide advice on employment matters, advice and consultation with regard to risk to young people/vulnerable adults can be sought from the local Tusla social work office.
- The Chairperson will ensure that actions taken by Remember Us do not frustrate or undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. Remember Us will liaise closely with the investigating bodies to ensure this.
- The requirements of fair procedure and natural justice mean that Tusla usually will not share the detail of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a staff member /volunteer

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until they have had an opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions of Tusla.

**Erroneous allegations**

Staff members or volunteers working with young people/vulnerable adults may feel vulnerable to accusations of child abuse. Across the sector there may have been occasions when erroneous or untrue allegations have been made against staff/volunteers. This might have been because of misunderstandings or a genuine mistake.

Any allegation of abuse against a staff member/volunteer will be dealt with sensitively, and support provided by Remember Us for both the staff member and/or volunteer who allegedly abused a young person/ and the worker/employee/volunteer who reported the alleged abuse.

Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be ensured, any information relating to the allegation will be distributed within the guidelines and process detailed above.

**Whistle blowing** –a responsibility to speak out

Remember Us Staff members/volunteers should be aware of the appropriate authorities outside Remember Us to whom you should report if you are inhibited, for any reason, in reporting an incident internally or where you are dissatisfied with the internal response.

Staff members/volunteers may refer to the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

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**Appendix 9**

**Definitions**

**A vulnerable adult** is a person aged 18 years or over who may require assistance to care for themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a disability (either mental health, intellectual or physical), a sensory impairment, are old and frail or have some other form of illness

**Vulnerable adult abuse** is any mistreatment that violates a person's human and civil rights, the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering. A vulnerable adult may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

**Physical abuse** such as hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, scalding, restraint, hair pulling

Sexual abuse such as rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting

**Psychological or emotional abuse** such as threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, being prevented from receiving services or support.

**Financial or material abuse** such as theft, fraud or exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance, misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

**Neglect** such as ignoring medical or physical care needs and preventing access to health, social care or educational services or withholding the necessities of life such as food, drink and heating

**Discriminatory abuse** such as that based on race or sexuality or a person's disability and other forms of harassment or slurs

**Institutional abuse** can sometimes happen in residential homes, nursing homes, hostels, holiday centres or hospitals when people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care, neglect and poor practice that affects the whole of that service.

**Domestic abuse** refers to the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships. This includes violence perpetrated by a spouse, partner, son or daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim. The term 'domestic violence' goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse; the destruction of property; isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support; threats to others including young people/vulnerable adults; stalking; and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone. In relation to children, exposure to Domestic Abuse, is defined as emotional abuse. Young people/vulnerable adults exposed to Domestic abuse are also at a higher risk of emotional and physical abuse.

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## Remember Us Policy Declaration Form



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I declare that I have read the Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and understand its contents and agree to abide by it for the safety and welfare of all young people/vulnerable adults in Remember Us. Breaches of the Remember Us Policy and Code of Good Practice will be dealt with under the Remember Us Disciplinary Procedures.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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