

Child Protection Policy

OVERVIEW

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, freelancers, volunteers, sessional workers and students or anyone working on behalf of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council).

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people taking part in our activities or receiving our services
- to provide our staff with the principles that guide our approach to child protection

Comhairle nan Leabhraichean believes that children and young people should not experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of all children and we are committed to carrying out our activities in a way that protects them from harm.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of laws and guidance that seek to protect children, including:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act (2007)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)
- other relevant guidance on child welfare

HOW WE WILL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We recognise that:

- the best interests of the child must always be a primary consideration
- all children and young people should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- all children and young people have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- all children and young people have the right to express their views on matters that affect them

We aim to keep children and young people safe by:

- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring that all necessary checks are made
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of behaviour (see pp3-4 below) for staff and volunteers
- ensuring that our staff and volunteers receive appropriate child protection training, supervision and support
- developing and implementing appropriate procedures relating to our online content
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with relevant agencies, parents and children appropriately

DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND

Comhairle nan Leabhraichean ensures that its registration with Disclosure Scotland is kept up to date and that anyone working with children or young people on behalf of the organisation holds a protection of vulnerable groups (PVG) certificate.

Disclosure Scotland registered body code: COM1281618

Disclosure Scotland registered person:

- Alison Lang, Director (staff)

Disclosure Scotland PVG certificates registered to Comhairle nan Leabhraichean are held by the following individuals who have regular contact with children and young people in the course of their work for Comhairle nan Leabhraichean:

- Linda MacLeod, Young Reading Ambassador (freelance)
- Annabel Harrison, Education Co-ordinator (staff)

Comhairle nan Leabhraichean may also from time to time engage freelancers or volunteers who hold PVG certificates issued to them as individuals or through other organisations to work with children or young people.

CONTACT DETAILS

Anyone with questions or concerns about this policy or about child protection issues relating to Comhairle nan Leabhraichean's activities should contact Alison Lang, Director of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean, in the first instance, at alison@gaelicbooks.org or on 0141 337 6211.

Anyone with concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or young person should contact:

- Glasgow City Council social care services: 0141 287 0555 (office hours) or 0300 343 1505 (out of office hours), or the social care office of the relevant local authority
- Police Scotland: non-emergency number 101, emergency number 999
- Children 1st: 0131 446 2300

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is based on a template recommended by Children in Scotland and Creative Scotland in "Creating Safety – child protection guidelines for Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries" (2019): [Creating Safety | Creative Scotland](#). It was first drafted in June 2020 by Alison Lang, Director of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean.

This policy was originally approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 June 2020.

It was reviewed again and approved, without revisions, for a further year on 30 June 2021.

It was reviewed again and approved, without revisions, for a further year on 28 June 2022.

It was reviewed again and approved, with minor revisions, for a further year on 27 June 2023.

This version, updated to reflect current PVG certificate holders, was approved by the board at its meeting on 26 June 2024.

**Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council)
Our code of behaviour**

This code outlines what is expected of all staff, freelancers and volunteers working for Comhairle nan Leabhraichean, as well as anyone working in partnership with us or on our behalf.

The purpose of this code is:

- to protect children and young people from harm
- to help staff and volunteers maintain the standard of behaviour we expect

The role of staff and volunteers:

All staff and volunteers working for Comhairle nan Leabhraichean are acting in a position of trust and are expected to behave in an appropriate manner at all times. Comhairle nan Leabhraichean's activities will seldom necessitate close or unsupervised contact with children or young people, and in almost all cases parents or teachers will also be present. All adults involved in our activities should abide by this code of behaviour.

Staff and volunteers should:

- Operate within Comhairle nan Leabhraichean's policies and procedures including child protection guidelines referred to in the policy (see pp1-2 above)
- Treat everyone fairly, with respect, dignity and as an individual
- Engage with children and young people in a meaningful way, valuing their contribution
- Ensure that contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to Comhairle nan Leabhraichean's work
- Ensure that language used is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory
- Be aware of any additional vulnerabilities that some children, young people or communities may face
- Respect children and young people's right to privacy
- Ensure that activities are run as safely as possible with risks minimised
- Where possible, try to ensure there is more than one adult present during activities involving children
- Understand when physical contact is appropriate and be aware that physical contact can be misinterpreted
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report any concerns or allegations
- If concerns have been raised, record these as soon as possible by contacting the Director of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean on 0141 337 6211 or, in case of emergency, by contacting the police or child protection services on the numbers given on page 2 above

Staff and volunteers should not:

- Ignore or trivialise any concerns
- Promise confidentiality to a child or young person
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children, young people or their families, such as contact outside of work
- Provide personal contact details to or engage in online activity with children, young people or their families outside of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean's work
- Make sarcastic, offensive or sexually suggestive remarks or gestures directly to, or in front of, children and young people
- Conduct a sexual relationship with a young person

- Act in a way that could be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Allow bullying to take place without challenge
- Take unnecessary risks when assessment or policy suggest a different approach

Risk Assessment:

Staff, volunteers or others working with children and young people on behalf of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean should plan and assess the risks of any activity according to the following criteria:

- the suitability of the venue for the activity, to ensure the physical safety of participants
- the choice of texts and teaching materials appropriate to the age of participants
- the ratio of adults to children to provide adequate supervision
- what steps should be taken if something goes wrong

Training:

Staff, volunteers or others working on behalf of Comhairle nan Leabhraichean are encouraged to speak to the Director about any training they require in connection with their work with children and young people.

Safeguarding pledge:

All of us at Comhairle nan Leabhraichean promise to make sure that children and young people have the best time possible while they are taking part in our activities. We believe that you have a right to feel safe and comfortable while you are with us. We will do our very best to live up to the promises that we make to you.

We will:

- Make you feel welcome
- Always think about your needs as the main consideration
- Treat all children and young people fairly
- Make sure that all our staff and volunteers know what they are supposed to be doing
- Make our activities as safe as possible
- Listen to what you want to tell us
- Do our best to make sure you have fun
- Do what we say we will do!

Reviewing this code of behaviour:

This code of behaviour is to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy (see pp1-2 above). The policy and the code were originally approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 June 2020, and were subsequently reviewed and approved on 30 June 2021, on 28 June 2022, on 27 June 2023, and most recently on 26 June 2024.