

Blarney Brass & Reed Band
(and associated Youth Musical Education Programme)

Child Protection Policy

**BLARNEY BRASS
& REED BAND**

CHILD PROTECTION

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Blarney Brass & Reed Band
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Child Protection Policy

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(This document may be subject to periodic revision. At each revision all members of the band and parents/guardians of minors who are members of BB&RB will be made aware of the changes made)

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1.0 Responsibilities

The Blarney Brass & Reed Band will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in the activities of the association safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children .
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Require members to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures.
- Implement Garda Vetting process, as outlined in the BBRB Garda Vetting Policy, for members supervising children or other statutory requirements.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.

For the purposes of this Policy and Procedures the Music Teacher's operating within the band's Youth Musical Education Programme and the band's Musical Director/Conductor or any person acting as Musical Director/Conductor are deemed to be members of the BB&RB.

2.0 Principles

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children have a lot to gain from participation in a band. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

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3.0 Designated Liaison Panel

The management committee of the Blarney Brass and Reed Band will appoint a panel of three adult persons of whom one only will be a playing member of the band. The remaining members shall not be playing members of the band.

The panel will be nominated by the committee each year. There is no maximum term for the panel members but it is recognised that from time to time changes may be made.

The names and contact details of the members of the liaison panel will be clearly displayed where the band regularly practices or where educational activities take place

Panel members must be willing to have their background vetted by An Garda Síochána, if required.

The members of the Designated Liaison Panel will:

- Implement and promote the Blarney Brass & Reed Band's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Act as the main contact within the band for the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Monitor Child Protection Procedures for the band.

3.1 Recommended Characteristics of members of the Designated Liaison Panel:

- Have an understanding of the issues affecting children and the sensitive way in which they must be managed.
- Be able to communicate the implications of protecting children to all members.
- Be able to communicate with children.
- Be supportive of the introduction of the Child Protection Policy.
- Have an understanding and appreciation of the need to respect confidentiality.
- Be able to follow procedures and recognise when to seek advice and not rely solely on their own judgement.
- Be willing to challenge members who do not comply with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

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4.0 Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of the Blarney Brass & Reed Band when in contact with children. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be sanctioned.

4.1 Good Practice

The Blarney Brass & Reed Band supports and requires the following good practice by members when in contact with children.

When working with children .:

- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for activities.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child , it is provided openly, the child is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.

Taking and transporting children away from home

If it is necessary to provide transport or take children away from home the following good practice must be followed:

- Always tell another member that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured.
- All reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn.
- Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children . These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by the BB&RB's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

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4.2 Practice To Be Avoided

- Avoid having ‘favourites’ - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could lead to false allegations.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Ensure that when children are taken away from home, adults avoid entering their rooms unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Avoid taking children to your home, unless in groups.

4.3 Practice never to be sanctioned

- Never engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never engage in rough or physical contact.
- Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children.
- Never allow or engage in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Never allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never share a room with a child for sleeping accommodation.
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.

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4.4 Children in Publications and on the Internet

The Blarney Brass and Reed Band hosts a website to promote its activities. Websites and publications provide excellent opportunities to broadcast achievements of individuals to the world and to provide a showcase for the activities of young people. In some cases, however, displaying certain information about children could place them at risk. The following procedure must be followed to ensure that information on the band's internet website does not place children at risk.

The Blarney Brass & Reed Band's publications and the Blarney Brass & Reed Bands information on the Internet must adhere to the following:

- Publications or information on the Blarney brass & Reed Band's website must never include personal information that could identify a child e.g. home address, e-mail address, telephone number of a child. Any contact information must be directed to the Blarney Brass & Reed Band.
- Before publishing any information about a child, written consent must be obtained from the child's parent/guardian.

Important Note: Any concerns or enquiries about publications or internet information should be reported to a member of the Blarney Brass & Reed Band's Designated Liaison Panel.

4.5 Band Events involving Overnight Stays Away from Home

In addition to the good practice guidelines relating to taking and transporting children away from home outlined in sections 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3 the following procedures apply when overnight or extended stays away from home are involved

- A Consent Form is to be completed by parents of children or young people giving permission for their child to travel to events with the band involving overnight stays away from home.
- A Health Form is to be completed by parents of children or young people stating any special dietary requirements and current medication e.g. asthma, diabetes, allergies, and including the telephone number of the child's doctor.
- There will always be an adequate number of adults travelling with the group who will ensure that children and young people travelling with the band are kept safe at all times, in line with the good practice guidelines of this policy.
- It is not permissible for adults to share sleeping accommodation with children or young people unless as a family unit.

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5.0 Reporting Incidents

If members have concerns about an incident involving a child that seems untoward or unusual they must report their concerns as soon as possible to a member of the Designated Liaison Panel. Parents should also be informed of the incident as soon as possible unless it is not in the child's interests to tell them

Report, record and inform if the following occur:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.
- If a child needs to be restrained.

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5.1 Responding to Disclosures

Information you receive about or from a child may fall into one of the following categories:

- 1 Suspicion or allegation of misconduct against a member of the BB&RB.
- 2 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against a member of the BB&RB.
- 3 Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour against someone who is not a member
- 4 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is not a member

If unclear about the nature of the information (and therefore which category the disclosure falls into) advice must be sought from a member of the Designated Liaison Panel or the Gardai or Social Work Department of the HSE.

It is not the responsibility of anyone from the Blarney Brass & Reed Band to decide whether or not a child has been abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

It is very important that members of the Blarney Brass & Reed Band understand what is meant by the term 'abuse'. The different types of abuse are:

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Negative Discrimination (including racism)
- Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family members; physical bullying; verbal bullying; bullying by internet or mobile phone usage, teasing; and harassment)

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5.2 How to Listen to a Disclosure

It is important to listen carefully to the information a child discloses. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is required:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Listen to the child/vulnerable adult.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or vulnerable adult.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult.

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5.3 Actions to Avoid when Receiving a Disclosure

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Avoid giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

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5.4 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Member of the BB&RB

The feelings caused by the discovery of potential abuse by a member will raise different issues, e.g. disbelief that a member would act in this way. It is not the responsibility of a member to take responsibility or to decide whether or not a child has been abused. However, as with allegations against non-members, it is the responsibility of the individual to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concern about the behaviour of a member towards a child must be passed on as soon as possible that day, in accordance with these procedures. No member in receipt of such information shall keep that information to himself/ herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse against a member are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

On receiving information about a member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child as detailed in the section on ‘How to Listen to Disclosures’.
- Pass your concerns to a member of the Designated Liaison Panel on the day or if not available, the Social Work Department of the HSE or the Gardai in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred .
- Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.
- Sign and date the record including what you have seen, heard or been told, that day.
- Pass the record to the member of the Designated Liaison Panel or the HSE Social Work Department or Gardai.
- The DLP will inform the parents of the child of any actions planned.
- The DLP will let the member against whom the allegation has been made know of the allegation made against them and allow them the right to respond.
- Where a suspicion or allegation of abuse has been reported against a member of the BB&RB one member of the DLP may not deal with both the member and the child in case a conflict of interest may arise.

Important Note: Where the concern is about a member of the Designated Liaison Panel who is a playing member of the band it must be reported to another member of the DLP.

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5.5 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against Someone who is Not a Member of the BB&RB

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are less than usual. If a child says or indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, you must react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, a member of the Designated Liaison Panel must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If no member of the Designated Liaison Panel is available, external agencies such as the Gardai and Social Work Department must be consulted for advice. This is important because they have an overview of child protection issues and they may well have other information that together causes concern.

- On receiving information about a non-member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse.
- Pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Gardai in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately). Act on any advice given. At the earliest opportunity tell a member of the Designated Liaison Panel about the action taken.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words. The information must, where known, include the following:
 - Name of child/vulnerable adult.
 - Age, date of birth of child/vulnerable adult.
 - Home address and telephone number of the child/vulnerable adult.
 - The nature of the allegation in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.
 - Any times, dates or other relevant information.
 - Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person.
 - The child/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.

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- The nature of the allegation (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location of alleged incident).
- A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not examine the child/vulnerable adult).
- Details of any witnesses to the incident.
- Whether the child/vulnerable adult's parents/guardians/carers have been contacted.
- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.
- If it is not the child/vulnerable adult making the report, whether the child/vulnerable adult has been spoken to, if so what was said.
- Record, sign and date on the day what you have seen, heard or been told.
Pass the record to A HSE Social Worker or the Gardai.

6.0 Actions for members of the Designated Liaison Panel when Concerns are Reported

1. It is the members of the Designated Liaison Panel's (DLP) responsibility to pass on any information regarding child abuse (physical/emotional/sexual) to the appropriate authorities for investigation. (HSE/Gardai)
2. It is not the role of any member of the DLP to investigate an incident/alleged incident.
3. It is the duty of the members of the DLP to inform the committee of the BB&RB of any allegation or incidence of abuse at the earliest opportunity.

6.1 BB&RB's Disciplinary Procedure

1. Where a member of the BB&RB has been accused of child abuse, the member shall be suspended from all band activities pending the outcome of an investigation. Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. The member may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out.
2. Where an allegation of child abuse is upheld against a member of the BB&RB, that member shall be expelled from the band.

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7.0 Confidentiality Statement

- All information given to members of the DLP or to the Band Management Committee will be treated in strict confidentiality
- However, where child protection concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know basis' in the best interests of the child and sharing of information in this regard is not a breach of confidentiality.
- Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared and will be informed, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.
- All records will be kept in a secure and confidential manner.

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8.0 Contact Details

8.1 Designated Liaison Panel (DLP) Members.

Ms. Marian McCarthy
36, Woodlands,
Kerry Pike,
Co. Cork.
Ph. 021-4874845
Mob. 087-9262232

Ms. Lucy O'Sullivan,
'Kaos',
Killowen,
Blarney,
Co. Cork.
Mob. 087-8388681

Mr. Finbar Mohally
38, Castleowen
Blarney,
Co. Cork.
Ph. 021-4385987

8.2 HSE Social Work (Child Care & Protection) / An Garda Siochána

HSE Social Work Services (North Lee)
Blackpool,
Cork.
Ph. 021-4927000

An Garda Siochána
Blarney Garda Station,
Blarney,
Co. Cork.
Ph. 021-4516290

The HSE Social Work Service is only available from 09.00 to 17.00 hrs, Monday to Friday (excl. Public Holidays). Outside of these hours An Garda Siochána should be contacted in the first instance. When Blarney Garda Station is unmanned calls to this number are automatically transferred to Gurrabraher Garda Station which is attended at all times.

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