



**LEIXLIP MUSICAL
& VARIETY GROUP**

Policy for the Protection and Welfare of
Children and Young People

LMVG, August 2023



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1 Introduction

This *Policy for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults*, is available to all members, children and parents involved with Leixlip Musical and Variety Group (LMVG). It is also publicly available on www.lmvg.ie.

It has been devised in accordance with the following:

- *Children First Act 2015*
- *National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016*
- *Our Duty to Care – Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People*, Dept. of Health and Children 2002.

This policy will be reviewed and updated (where necessary) every year, by incoming Committees.

The 2023/2024 LMVG Committee reviewed and approved this policy, in **August 2023**. They are;

- Judy Miller (Chairperson)
- Elaine Brunton (Vice Chairperson)
- Avril Doyle (Secretary)
- Anne Fitzpatrick (Treasurer)
- Lynn Brennan (PRO)
- Ciarán Austin
- Ben Cole
- Ciara Brennan



2 LMVG Statement

LMVG is committed to a child-centred approach to our work involving children and young people. This work primarily consists of musical theatre productions and related activities which are organised annually in Leixlip, Co Kildare.

We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount. Our aim is to promote best practice in child protection and set out a procedural framework to ensure that members are equipped to make informed and confident responses to specific issues and take proactive steps to minimise risk about protection and welfare issues.

LMVG acknowledges that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.



3 Code of Behaviour

The welfare of children and young people involved in LMVG, is paramount in all decisions, activities and programmes involving them. LMVG expects all members or associates working with children and young people to;

- Provide safe spaces for them, ensuring they are safeguarded, physically and emotionally, in a healthy learning environment
- Actively listen to them, taking account of their expression of needs and concerns
- Value and respect them as individuals
- Involve them in decisions made about them, in as participative and appropriate a manner as possible.

LMVG does *not* accept the following behaviours and will intervene to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all people;

- Bullying
- Violence
- Sarcasm, name-calling, 'slagging', and other forms of scapegoating
- Favouring some to the exclusion of others
- Abusive language or gestures
- Negative criticism of young people's values, beliefs and opinions
- Negatively highlighting physical, social or emotional differences.



Members of LMVG and those involved with it should always be mindful that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards children and young people must be above reproach. The following points are not intended to discourage positive interaction between adults and children and young people, but to assist adults by offering guidance on appropriate conduct.

3.1 General Guidelines

- Always dress and act appropriately in the presence of children and young people
- Ensure that relationships or interactions with children and young people are always appropriate
- Lead by example
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Use a child-centred approach
- Treat all children and young people equally and as individuals
- Listen to, and involve children and young people in decision-making
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Respect a child or young person's personal space
- Where possible, avoid one to one contact with children and young people, particularly in areas such as toilets, cars and dressing rooms
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and sanctions, as appropriate, with responsible adults
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
- Be aware of a child or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams
- Be cognisant of a child or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race, gender and sexual orientation
- Ensure all communications sent on behalf of LMVG (e.g., emails, social media posts, text messages, website) use appropriate language and content.



3.2 What is Inappropriate Behaviour?

- Spending excessive time alone with children or young people
- Using (or allowing) inappropriate offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language
- Singling out a particular child or young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus or attention
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- Hitting or physically chastising a child or young person
- Socialising inappropriately with children or young people outside of structured organisational activities
- Inviting children or young people to one's home
- Taking children or young people alone on journeys, however short - use taxis with consent from the named adult responsible.

3.3 Physical Contact

- Do not engage in 'horseplay' or any inappropriate touch
- Seek consent for any necessary contact and check the level of comfort with necessary touch
- Be governed by age and developmental stage
- There may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as physical support. In such cases, monitor the contact, ensuring it is appropriate to a task and verifiable.

3.4 Health and Safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised
- Manage any dangerous materials with caution
- Provide a safe environment.



3.5 Privacy

- Permission must be sought from the young person and their primary carer prior to taking any photographs or recordings
- Official photographs should only be taken in a planned manner and for which the subject and those responsible have consented
- Confidentiality and privacy should be maintained in any use of images to be published or disseminated in all media platforms.

3.6 Working with Other organisations and Individuals

When collaborating with other organisations or individuals, involving them in group activities or productions, LMVG must be satisfied that they have sound policies for the protection and welfare of children and young people in place. LMVG must ensure that all parties are fully aware of each other's commitments and responsibilities in this regard.

3.7 Garda Vetting

Upon election annually, the full LMVG Committee are subject to Garda Vetting, through our relevant organisation, AIMS, the Association of Irish Musical Societies. Vetting is conducted by the National Vetting Bureau (formerly known as the Garda Central Vetting Unit).

LMVG will also ensure that others involved with the group, who work directly with children and young people, are also subject to Garda Vetting, annually.

Vetting disclosures include particulars of the criminal record (if any) relating to the person, and a statement of the specified information (if any) relating to the person or a statement that there is no criminal record or specified information, in relation to the person.

In cases where a vetting disclosure is of concern, this will be reviewed by the DLP and DDLP in the first instance and if necessary, by the LMVG Committee, to agree an appropriate course of action.



4 Reporting Procedures

4.1 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

LMVG will appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare within the group and to respond to any concerns that may be identified. A Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) should also be appointed to cover this role when the DLP is unavailable or if he/she is directly involved in an incident, suspicion or accusation. The DLP has primary responsibility for implementing this policy, advising others on protection and welfare guidelines and liaising with other agencies where appropriate.

Appointed Liaisons, August 2023		
Designated Liaison Person (DLP)	Judy Miller, Chair	086 323 6326
Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP)	Elaine Brunton, Vice Chair	086 071 2605

4.2 Duties of the DLP and DDLP

- Ensure the policy and procedures are implemented and that reporting procedures are followed
- Refer and report any relevant concerns
- Keep informed of developments in protection and welfare issues
- Provide information and advice within the group
- Liaise with other agencies where appropriate
- Keeping the records related to this policy in a secure manner.

The DLP and DDLP will undergo training on an annual basis.



4.3 Grounds for Concern

There are reasonable grounds for concern if a child or young person gives;

- A specific indication from a person that s/he has been abused
- An account by witness to abuse
- Evidence, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
- Injury or behaviour consistent with abuse, with an innocent explanation but corroborative indicators of abuse
- Consistent signs over a period of time of emotional or physical neglect.

4.4 Tips When Dealing with a Disclosure

- Stay calm and listen to the child or young person, allow enough time for them to say what they need to say
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details
- Reassure the child or young person but do not promise to keep anything secret
- Don't make the child or young person repeat the details unnecessarily
- Explain to the child or young person what will happen next (in an age- appropriate way).

4.5 Next Steps

Any person who has received a disclosure or who has concerns of abuse should bring this to the attention of the DLP (or DDLP).

- A confidential record of the report will be kept with the DLP on an Incident Report Form
- The LMVG Committee will be notified when a report is made
- The DLP may contact other relevant agencies for informal advice
- In an emergency, the Gardaí may be contacted directly
- The DLP will keep a record of reasons for not reporting a concern or disclosure
- Unless doing so is likely to endanger a person, allegations, concerns or disclosures should be discussed with primary carers / responsible adults.



5 Confidentiality Statement

LMVG is committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality.

- Giving information to others, for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality
- However, information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard a child or young person
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of a child or young person are at risk
- Primary carers/responsible adults and the child have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to another agency, unless doing so could put the person at further risk
- Images of a child or young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the primary carer
- Procedures are in place in relation to the use of images of children and young people, however, LMVG cannot guarantee that cameras/ videos will not be used by others, at public performances.



6 Dealing with Allegations

In the event of allegations being made, the protection of the child or young person is the first and paramount consideration.

LMVG has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the alleged person. The same person will not have responsibility for dealing with the child/young person welfare issues.

An allegation will be assessed promptly and carefully. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a formal report to the HSE, Tusla or Gardaí will be made.

Two separate procedures must be followed:

- The DLP will deal with **issues related to the child or young person** who may be at risk
 - Both the primary carer and person at child or young person will be informed of actions planned and taken, in an age-appropriate manner
 - The General Reporting Procedures outlined in these guidelines will be followed.

- The DDLP will deal with **issues related to that person against whom an allegation has been made;**
 - That person will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegations
 - They should also be given the opportunity to respond

- If allegations are made against the DLP, then the DDLP should be contacted.

LMVG may seek separate legal advice on the procedures or protocols if deemed necessary.



6.1 Complaints

This procedure covers situations where children or young people or their carers are not happy with the way they are treated or protected.

- A complaint should be directed to the DLP, who has responsibility for directing it to the appropriate person
- If the complaint involves the DLP, then the DDLP should be contacted
- All decisions will be communicated in writing and complaints or comments will be responded to within 2 weeks
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to where appropriate and feasible.