Child Safeguarding Statement

The welfare of all children and adults attending the Mother Tongues and the Festival and the Language Explorers workshops is paramount. Our aim is to ensure that all audience members enjoy their Mother Tongues events and are safe from harm at all times.

Name of service

Mother Tongues, Blessington Rd, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 KV8N

Nature of Service provided

The idea for the Mother Tongues Festival is to start a project aimed at celebrating language. It is linked to the celebrations of UNESCO International Mother Language Day in February.

("On International Mother Language Day 2018, celebrated every year on 21 February, UNESCO reiterates its commitment to linguistic diversity and invites its Member States to celebrate the day in as many languages as possible as a reminder that linguistic diversity and multilingualism are essential for sustainable development".

What makes the festival unique is the possibility to take part in art, music, drama and science workshops in different languages. The fact that people of all ages and nationalities walk into classes led in a completely new language shows the impact and importance of the project.

Our festival allows people to connect through language and highlights that diversity does not represent a barrier, but rather a reason to get together and celebrate.

Language Explorers is Mother Tongues' flagship programme for children in the early years. The Language Explorers workshops have a strong focus on language development, parent-child communication and literacy. Workshops provide a high-quality creative experience for parents and their children based on storytelling, drama, visual arts and music.

Our mission is to facilitate children and adults to explore the wonder of language(s) through the magic of creative expression. Fundamental to this is creating an experience where children who participate in any aspect of the Mother Tongues events are treated with respect and care and where their emotional, physical and mental safety is paramount. We want our audience to enjoy their experience from the moment they receive a MT programme or are told about a workshop to the moment they walk out of a theatre or workshop space after engaging in a MT event. Their MT experience is not just about the show they see or the workshop they engage in, it is also about how they are treated, cared for and respected by all members of the MT staff they come in contact with. These underlying principles operate throughout the team when dealing with any member of the public on behalf of MT.

MT is committed to a child-centred approach in our work with children and young people. It is central to the philosophy of Mother Tongues to create an environment and experience, where children are unconditionally respected and kept safe from harm while using our services.

Below are MT's principles and procedures which should be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child is safe from harm while availing of our services.

• All MT festival staff and volunteers have undertaken Tusla online Child Protection Training – Children First E-Learning and are made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of those who have been designated to deal with issues of concern.

• All staff are required to consent to Garda clearance.

• All staff will receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices.

• Children are always accompanied by a parent/guardian, teacher or at least 2 MT team members, in which case parent/guardians must sign their child in and out with (the MT workshop coordinator) and must leave their contact details while attending an MT event.

• No child is ever left alone in the presence of an individual MT staff member, there are always at least 2 staff members in attendance.

• All child protection or welfare concerns will be reported to Tusla/Gardaí in a timely manner.

• A child in need of personal support because of illness, physical needs or any form of distress, shall be referred in the first place to his/her parent/guardian or teacher. In the absence of a guardian, the staff member who is working with or supervising that activity will provide such support. A parent/guardian or teacher should inform a member of staff if there are any specific needs required during a child's participation at a MT event.

Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Non-compliance with MT's Child Protection Policy	All staff and volunteers are provided with the Child Protection Policy. Any breach of the Child Protection Policy will be reported to the relevant line manager. The Child Protection Policy is reviewed every 12 months.
Delay in making referrals to Tusla	All staff are trained and supported to ensure they can act promptly and not delay in contacting the Mandated Person or Tusla when they deem a referral may be required.

Receipt of complaints of alleged child abuse where a MT team member is the alleged perpetrator.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. Internal disciplinary processes are in place where the issue concerns an employee.
Receipt of complaint of alleged child abuse where a parent, guardian or teacher is the alleged perpetrator.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla. The school will be notified.
Child makes a disclosure to a member of staff	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla.
A suspicion of child abuse is determined by a member of staff.	All staff know the procedures to make a referral to the Mandated Person or directly to Tusla.

The MT's Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the *Children First Act 2015*, and the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our services
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children

- Procedure for provision of, and access to, child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla or the Gardaí as appropriate
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are 'Mandated Persons' as defined under the Children First Act 2015
- Procedure for appointing a Mandated Person.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

Implementation

MT recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Statement will be reviewed in **January 2028** or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signatories of this statement:

Name and contact details

Mother Tongues, Blessington Rd, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 KV8N. Tel: 089 4642725.

For queries in relation to this Child Safeguarding Statement please contact Lacie Raymond, Mandated Person, at the number above or email lacie@mothertongues.ie