



## Child Safeguarding Statement of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Ireland

JRS Ireland is a work of the Irish Jesuit Province, with a mission to accompany, advocate and serve the cause of asylum seekers, refugees and forced migrants in Ireland. This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the *Children First Act 2015* and is derived from *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* and the *Jesuit Safeguarding Procedures 2017*.

### 1. The key functions of JRS Ireland are:

- *Asylum Seeker Support and Integration*: To accompany and support asylum seekers in direct provision, refugees and persons granted leave to remain.
- *Detention*: To assist non Irish nationals detained under immigration related provisions.
- *Advocacy*: To advocate for a more just and fair asylum process and improvements in living conditions and supports for asylum seekers, refugees and forced migrants.
- *Awareness Raising*: To foster a more positive 'public image' of asylum seekers and forced migrants in Ireland and to deepen public understanding of asylum and migration issues.
- *Volunteers and Networking*: To engage volunteers actively in providing services and to build JRS's relationships with internal (JRS National and Regional Offices) and partner organisations.

### 2. The Jesuit Refugee Service delivers the above functions through the following services:

- **Asylum Seeker Support and Integration:**
  - Accompaniment/ outreach to individuals, children and families in 10 direct provision centres.
  - Delivery of project and services including education, language acquisition, capacity building, personal development, life skills, information and advice.
  - Supports for asylum seeking and refugee children including annual summer programme, homework club(s), intercultural and sporting activities.
  - Transition and integration supports for individuals and families granted status.
- **Detention:**
  - Visiting non Irish national women detained in Dóchas centre under immigration provisions.
- **Advocacy:**
  - Research and development of policy papers and submissions on asylum and refugee issues.
  - Engagement with policy makers, legislators and statutory immigration and asylum bodies.
- **Awareness Raising:**
  - Presentations in schools and peer to peer language learning activities.
- **Volunteers and Networking:**
  - Training and placement of volunteers to assist in the delivery of JRS Ireland services.

### **3. The Jesuit Refugee Service's principles to safeguard children from harm are:**

1. The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Through training, communication and quality assurance, we will ensure that we create safe environments for children and young people and those who work with them.
2. The best interests of the child remain paramount.
3. Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
4. Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted with in matters involving their child or family.
5. Mandatory reporting: Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:
  - physically
  - emotionally
  - sexually
  - through neglect.
6. A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/carers and families.
7. Child protection is a multiagency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of the children.

### **4. Risk Assessment of Potential Harm to Children while availing of our services**

Note: the definition of harm in relation to a child is: 'assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or sexual abuse of the child'.

In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, JRS Ireland has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child participating in JRS Ireland projects and activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the organisation's procedures for managing those risks has been undertaken. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

### **5. Procedures**

All procedures relevant to the risk assessment above are available at Jesuit Safeguarding Procedures (2017) on [www.jesuit.ie/safeguarding](http://www.jesuit.ie/safeguarding) and [www.jrs.ie](http://www.jrs.ie). The procedures listed include the following:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service. (Standard 2: Responding to allegations and concerns; Standard 4: Management and care of respondents)
- 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.
- Procedures related to the delivery of JRS Ireland services to children
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for safe working practices and IT usage.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

## 6. Implementation

The Jesuit Refugee Service is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* and the *Jesuit Safeguarding Procedures 2017*. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed: 

Eugene Quinn, JRS Ireland, National Director

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018

For any queries relating to this statement please contact David Moriarty, Relevant Person for JRS Ireland at [david.morairty@jrs.ie](mailto:david.morairty@jrs.ie) or 086-6028533 and regarding Irish Jesuit Province child safeguarding procedures Saoirse Fox Safeguarding Manager at [safeguarding@jesuitlink.ie](mailto:safeguarding@jesuitlink.ie) or 01-4987333.