

Child Protection Policy

Part 1

The Keystone Clinic aims to safeguard the welfare of all children who attend therapeutic intervention by protecting them from neglect; verbal, physical, sexual, and emotional harm.

- The welfare of the child is of paramount importance.
- The Keystone Clinic acknowledges that parents/guardians are the primary carers/educators of their children and respect the rights and needs of families. However, where there may be a conflict of interest the Child's welfare will come first.
- The Keystone Clinic is guided by "Children First – National guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children." A copy of this policy is kept by the therapists of The Keystone Clinic and can be found on Gov.ie and Tusla.ie
- The Keystone Clinic is committed to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child – ratified by Ireland in 1992.
- The Therapists in the Keystone Clinic adhere to their accreditation body policies and procedures regarding all aspects of therapeutic intervention including child protection. The therapist is responsible for disclosing which accreditation body they are working with, and any person can access these policies from the accreditation body's website at any stage.
- The therapist will be responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse to HSE Social Services and/or the Garda Síochána.
- Therapists at the Keystone Clinic are responsible for protecting and promoting children's rights in their care and adhering to the code of ethics within their accreditation body.
- All therapists will be required to state that there is no reason they would be unsuitable to work with children and declare any past criminal convictions. All therapists will have undergone a Garda Vetting procedure to obtain their accreditation status.

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Part 2

Recognizing and responding to abuse

“Children First Guidelines” advise that the ability to recognise child abuse depends on a person’s willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. The Keystone Clinic commits to the responsibility of ensuring that all members have received training in the recognition of signs of abuse and on how to report it.

Individual Therapists in their own work practice will keep written data of any information deemed to be grounds for concern. Observations by therapists will be recorded and will include dates, times, names, locations and context and any other information which could be considered relevant, or which might facilitate further assessment/investigation.

In the event of a child disclosing or hinting at abuse to a therapist; it must be handled very sensitively.

- The Therapist must consider whether there are reasonable grounds for reporting it to the HSE Social services.
- A record in writing of what the child has said will be kept. Care will be taken to use, as far as possible, the exact words utilized by the child. This written record will be signed and dated by the therapist and kept in a confidential file.
- The therapist will make every effort to contact the parents/guardians to discuss the disclosure made by the child. A written record will be kept of this meeting with the parents. Parents will be informed of any decision to make a report to the Health Services Executive, unless such an action could place the child at further risk.
- Once agreed that a report needs to be made, the therapist will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Services Executive, by telephone and in writing.