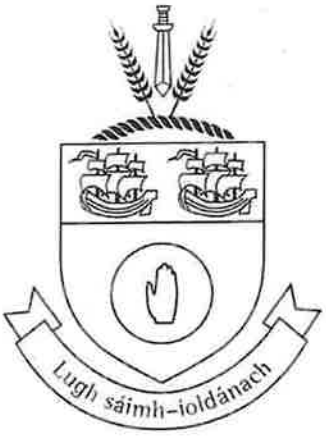


Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

Subsidiary Service Specific Child Safeguarding Statement

Louth County Council Library Service and Co. Museum

Date: November 2026, Version 4

To be read in conjunction with the Louth County Council Child Safeguarding Statement.

This statement sets out the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as possible, that a child availing of Louth County Council Library Services & Co. Museum Dundalk is safe from harm.

1. **Name of service being provided:**

Louth County Council Public Library Service, Library HQ, County Hall, Millennium Centre Dundalk, County Louth & Co. Museum, Jocelyn St., Dundalk

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

Louth County Council Public Library Service provides a full and varied service to all children and young people in County Louth free of charge. We view children and young people as valued citizens and we aim to provide a child-centred and fully inclusive library service to them.

Junior and Young Adult (12-17years) sections are provided in every branch library and are furnished to encourage children and young people to feel engaged and comfortable. Comprehensive collections for children and young people are provided in all five branches, the mobile and schools service with both physical books and e-resources that reflect a diversity of needs in different age groups.

Educational and literacy development needs are catered for on an individual, family and school basis. As well as hosting family visits to our five branch libraries, a schools service provides block loan class material to schools throughout the county.

Internet and Wi-Fi access is provided to children and young people subject to our Internet Access Policy. Children can participate in a wide range of activities in our libraries designed to entertain, teach, involve and stimulate ideas in the youngest members of our community.

We strive to provide a safe, creative and welcoming space to all using the service by endeavouring to uphold the highest possible standards in child protection and taking all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable people who use our service as outlined in *Children First; National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.*

Louth County Council's child-centred approach

Louth County Councils child-centred approach means we:

- Treat all children equally
- Listen to and respect children
- Involve children as appropriate

- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (verbal and physical)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Treat all children as individuals
- Respect a child's personal space
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids
- Lead by example
- Be aware of child time limitations e.g. school/exams when scheduling activities
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Be aware of the *Equal Status Act 2000-2019* which relates to discrimination based on grounds of :
    - Gender
    - Civil Status
    - Family Status
    - Age
    - Race
    - Religion
    - Disability
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Membership of the Traveller community

2. Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. The list of risks listed below should be read in conjunction with the corporate identified risks included in the Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the procedures for managing these risks. Please note **Harm** in this assessment is as defined in the Children First Act 2015, means 'in relation to a child – and a **Child** is anyone under 18 years of age –

(a) 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

(b) Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.'

Risk identified	**Procedure in place to manage risk identified**
One to one contact	Parents are advised to accompany children on library visits. Accompanying teacher/s must be present for school visits. Procedure states • Library and Museum employees shall always ensure that their behaviour is appropriate to the age and maturity of the child or young person concerned. • When in the public area, lone workers should ensure that they remain in areas where they can be seen and heard by Museum and library users. ▪ Never accompany unaccompanied child home/outside the library or Museum. ▪ Never initiate/continue contact with a child outside the Museum or library either by phone or by social media etc.
Location of toilets/access	Staff are never to accompany children to toilets. Staff should be vigilant and be aware of children using toilets unaccompanied. A child should be accompanied to the toilet by parent/guardian or responsible person or teacher who has accompanied them to the library. In the case of the Museum it is preferable that a child should be accompanied to the toilet by parent/guardian or responsible person or teacher who has accompanied them to the Museum.
Areas out of view of staff desk	Public areas are covered by CCTV cameras
Unaccompanied children	Notices online and in libraries state that children must be accompanied by an adult when using the library. Teachers must supervise class use of the school library van. Parents are informed at

	booking that they must stay with children at events. 12-17 year olds must have parental consent to join and use the library unaccompanied. In the case of the Museum, notices *state that children must be accompanied by an adult when using the facility*. The Museum reserves the right to refuse admission. Parents/guardians are informed at booking that they must stay with children at events.
Overcrowding at children's events Child wandering off at an event	Event is planned and specific risk assessment for the event is carried out. Parents stay with their children; teachers stay with their classes. Fire cert is complied with and adequate first aiders are available. Maximum attendance figure is complied with. Announcements about supervision requirements are made by staff at the beginning of children's events. Buggies should not block exits.
Suspicions of abuse and neglect to a child or vulnerable adult.	Policies in place. LCC Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children, 2026. Library staff are trained in Child Protection Awareness (Category A). A Designated Liaison Person(DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons are in place for the purposes of any child protection concerns and to ensure that reporting procedures within the Council are followed correctly, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to the relevant agencies. They also act as the liaison person with other agencies. Designated Liaison Person:

	Amanda Branigan, Co. Librarian Deputy Designated Liaison Persons: Linda Larrigan, Senior Executive Librarian Killian Owens, Human Resources Christopher Connolly, Civil Defence Officer
Unacceptable behaviour by children while using Museum or libraries.	Parents/responsible person/teacher must take responsibility for behaviour of their children whilst on library premises. Policy is in place dealing with child protection in libraries or Museum. Code of behaviour for all users of Louth County Council facilities is in place. CCTV is in place in the Museum and fulltime libraries. Lone working security devices in place in library branches where lone working may occur. Library and Museum staff trained in dealing with incidents of violence and aggression. In the case of the library parents or guardians will be informed if behaviour is unacceptable and the child membership can be suspended. Similarly, if unacceptable behaviour occurs in the Museum parents or guardians will be informed.
Photography/Use of images of children	Parental consent must be obtained prior to events where photographs may be taken. The consent form will detail where and how the images will be used. Unauthorised photography/video recording is not permitted. Group photos are preferable to individual ones. It will be ensured that images do not contribute or expose children to embarrassment, distress or upset. Images will only be used for the purposes stated on the consent form.

	Staff to announce at start of each session - "In the interests of child protection, videoing is not permitted and photography must not include other children without explicit permission of parent or guardian".
Online activity though public access computers	Written policy is in place that governs the use of public access terminals and Wi-Fi. This policy is viewable on our website, in hard copy and on all public access terminals and must be accepted by members of the public before using the computers/Wi-Fi. Staff are aware of the policy and procedures for safe use of the internet. Parents and guardians are solely responsible for their children's use of the Web. Children under the age of 12 must have parental authorisation to use the computers. Children need a valid library card to use the internet. While content filtering is in place to prevent unsuitable images being viewed, please remember children who use the Internet unsupervised may be exposed to inappropriate or disturbing images. It is strongly recommended that parents supervise their children while viewing the Internet. Library staff cannot control what images or websites they access.
Opening times outside of normal hours (such as for special events, My Open Library hours.)	All children under the age of 16 will be accompanied by a responsible adult while using My Open Library. Young People aged 16 to 17 can use My Open Library having been inducted and receiving written parental consent. A parent must be present at induction and register as a My Open Library user and will be contacted if any issues regarding the My Open Library have arisen.
Third Party access to children	All relevant facilitators identified under *The Children and Vulnerable Persons Act, 2012* are Garda vetted in compliance with the act and renewed every 3-5 years.
Children not collected at closing	Children remain the responsibility of the parent/guardian. In the case of the Museum, notices state that children should not be left unattended in the Museum. Communications from the Museum to schools in relation to events

	at the Museum state that the school is **responsible** for all children brought to the Museum. Notices in libraries and online are provided that state that children should not be left unattended in the library. If the library is closing 2 staff members should remain with the child and stay within an area covered by CCTV. Staff should contact the parent/guardian. Children should not be given into the care of anyone other than the parent/guardian. Contact Gardai if all attempts to contact the parent/guardian fails. All incidents, complaints, near misses are recorded and followed up with the designated liaison person.
Child safety for online events and activities	Facilitators should re-familiarise themselves with child safeguarding policies and statements and follow best practice. If the activity or event would require supervision and multiple staff/ facilitators in order to be delivered in a library branch, then this should apply online too. Online consent/permission forms signed by parent/guardian required in advance of child participating in online events If the event is going to be **recorded**, this should be clearly stated. The ways in which the recording is planned to be made available following the event should be declared. These both must be consented to by parents / guardians in advance. Under GDPR, the Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 and if **collecting personal data** or **creating profiles** online, parental consent is required for children below this age. It is advisable to ensure children under 16 access events using parents' / guardians' accounts rather than the email of the child.

	If the online event or activity will result in the children producing written, art or craft work etc. that they may be encouraged to photograph and send to the library for display online, this should be set out in advance as part of the consent form. Copyright in this work if published will be owned by the creator. If events consist of live video, terms of service, age requirements and function of the services must be considered. Chat option should be disabled or moderated. Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls by participants. Families, children, library facilitators and staff are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online. It is the duty of parents/guardians to supervise children while they are participating online and to ensure any content which they are submitting, or audiovisual contribution they are making is appropriate.

3. Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)* 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 service.

- Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Louth County Council Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children
- Louth County Council CCTV and Audio recording Policy
- LGMA Data Protection Policy
- National Garda Vetting procedure

- Guidelines for Child Safety for Online Events & Activities
- 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
- Procedure for maintaining a list of all of the persons who are mandated persons and Deputy Liaison Officers.

4. Reporting a Concern

Anyone can report a concern about a child. If you have any concerns about a child, you should report it to Tusla. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Any member of the public who has a concern about a child can contact the Tusla local social work duty service in the area where the child lives for advice about reporting your concerns.

In the event of any emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with Tusla, you should contact An Garda Síochána.

If a child is in danger outside office hours you can contact An Garda Síochána.

If you require any further information on the Local Authority's Policies and Procedures, please contact Human Resources or the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Liaison persons.

Further information on Child Protection – www.tusla.ie

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Specific Service 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 within 24 months or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: Amanda Branigan

Amanda Branigan

Louth County Librarian

Date: 3/11/2026

Signed:

Ger Murphy

Director of Service

Date: 3/11/26