



ROYAL BREFFNI TOURS

HOME OF THE CRYSTAL MAZE

Office Telephone: 087 9667276

info@royalbreffnitours.com

www.royalbreffnitours.com

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Statement Of Policy

Royal Breffni Tours home of The Crystal Maze is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all the children while they are availing of our service. Our policy on child protection and safeguarding is in accordance with "Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017". We promote the rights of the child by implementing guiding principles which all employees and volunteers involved in any event with children, must adhere to. The guiding principles are set out in this document. The overall vision of the policy is; 'An Ireland where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential.' In this policy a child is someone under 18 years of age who is not married.

Context Of The Policy

The Children First Act 2015 places obligations on organisations that provide relevant services to children. These obligations are:

1. To keep children safe from harm while they are using the service
2. To carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child could be harmed which using the service and
3. To develop a Child Safeguarding Statement which must include both the written risk assessment and the procedures that are in place to:

- » Appoint relevant people in the organisation for the purposes of the Act
- » Select and recruit employees who are suitable to work with children
- » Provide information and training to employees on child protection and safeguarding issues
- » Investigate an allegation against any employees about any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the service
- » Enable employees to make a report to Tusla in accordance with the Act or any guidelines issued by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
- » Manage any risks identified

The Child Safeguarding Statement provides an overview of the measures that Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze has in place to ensure that children are protected from harm. It also refers to more detailed procedures which are set out in this policy.



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Risk is defined as “any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service.” Harm is defined as “(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.” It should be noted that risk in this context is the risk of abuse and not general health and safety risk.

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The designated liaison person has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the child protection and safeguarding policy of Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze is promoted and implemented. The deputy designated liaison person will take over the responsibilities of the designated liaison person if they are unavailable for a significant amount of time.

The role of the designated liaison person involves the following duties:

- To be familiar with “Children First”, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and the guiding principles of good practice for the protection of children.
- To ensure that training on the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is provided for all new and existing employees.
- To implement and monitor the procedures for good practice for the protection of children.
- To receive reports of alleged/suspected or actual child abuse and act on these in accordance with the guidelines
- To build a working relationship with Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other agencies, as appropriate.
- To ensure that supports are put in place for the child, employees or volunteers in cases of allegations being made.
- To ensure that systems are in place for recording and retaining all relevant documentation in relation to child protection issues.
- To review this policy and procedures on child protection on an annual basis and amend as appropriate.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Putting in place good procedures in recruitment and training practice is a central element in ensuring the safety and welfare of all children involved in the organisation. Best practice in the recruitment and management of workers includes providing information relevant to the post, seeking information from the



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applicant, Garda vetting, checking references, good HR practices in interviewing, induction, training, probation and on-going supervision and management.

In engaging employees or volunteers (long term, short term or event based) for Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze, the following procedures will be followed:

- Advertising the post
- Detailed job description
- Seeking information from the applicant
- Checking out references
- Obtaining Garda vetting
- Good HR practice; interviewing, induction, training including child safeguarding procedures and guiding principles
- Probationary period and on-going supervision and management

TRAINING

Induction training for any new employees/volunteers will include an in-depth breakdown of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Regular quality training and updates will be provided when necessary. Extra emphasis will be focused on those working directly with child.

Where young people, under 18 years, are assisting in the work of The Crystal Maze they will receive appropriate training at a level suitable to their age and experience. These young people will always work in partnership with or under the supervision of an adult.

A signed declaration that Child Protection and Safeguarding Training was conducted and confirmation that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents and that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with child will be obtained (see appendix 1). Employees/volunteers will be emailed a copy of this Policy and it will also be published on our website for all to access.

Working in partnership with other agencies/organisations

In the event of Royal Breffni Tours or The Crystal Maze using the service of another agency/organisation then our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy shall still apply to our employees. If the agency/organisation have their own employees, then confirmation of their own Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be sought.



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REPORTING PROCEDURE

Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze has put in place a standard reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse.

Parents/Guardians

Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze will keep parents and guardians informed of all aspects of the programme that their child is involved in. It is our policy to share information relating to the programme of activities, trips away, transport to and from events, etc. with the parents/guardians. It is our practice to inform parents/guardians first in the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse, unless this could put the child in danger.

Definition and Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Definitions of the four types of abuse, how to recognise abuse and an explanation of “reasonable grounds for concern” are detailed in appendix 2. which is based on “Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children”.

Responsibility to Report Child Abuse

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be experiencing abuse or have been abused in the past. This is an important responsibility for employees and volunteers when working with children. The guiding principles in regard to reporting children abuse are summarised as follows:

- (i) The safety and well-being of the child must take priority.
- (ii) Reports should be made without delay to Tusla.
- (iii) While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, children or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse.

Procedures

The reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse is outlined in the following steps:

- The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse, should bring it to the attention of the designated liaison person (DLP) immediately.



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- The designated liaison person will assess and review the information that has been provided. The DLP may contact Tusla for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.
- After consultation with Tusla officials, the designated liaison person will then take one of two options: (1) Report the allegation, concern or disclosure to Tusla or (2) Not make a formal report to Tusla but keep a record of the concerns on file. The reasons for not reporting the allegation, concern or disclosure will be clearly recorded. The employee/volunteer who made the initial report will be informed if a formal report is not being made to Tusla and it is open to him/her to make a formal report themselves, directly to the relevant authority if they feel this is necessary.
- Where a formal report is made, Tusla will then liaise with An Garda Síochána. It is likely that Tusla will want to speak to the person who first made the report to clarify facts and the circumstances of the report.
- In an emergency a report should be made directly to An Garda Síochána.
- In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the individual must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in an un-safe situation. Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Information required when making a report

The more information which is gathered and put together on the Standard Reporting Form the easier it will be to assess an allegation, concern or disclosure of abuse. These Standard Report Forms are available to download on tusla.ie Reports, which are made anonymously, will be followed up but this may take longer and will make it more difficult for the professionals involved to assess the situation. If a person is unsure about the case, it may be useful to talk over the issue with the designated liaison person or with a Tusla worker before making an official report.

Confidentiality

In matters of child abuse, an employee/volunteer should never promise to keep secret, any information which is divulged. It should be explained to the child that this information cannot be kept secret but only those who need to know, will be told. It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies. The information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and the number of people that need to be informed should be kept to a minimum.



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The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the designated liaison person, Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze values and encourages the full participation of children in many aspects of our work and we strive to ensure that the experience of the child in our work is a happy and productive one. In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the employee/volunteer involved. The following are guidelines to support the employee/volunteer in this:

- React calmly.
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the child seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you.
- Do not promise to keep anything secret.
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions.
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser.
- Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record.
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures which will follow.
- Pass the information on to the designated liaison person, do not attempt to deal with the problem alone.
- Treat the information confidentially.

ALLEGATION

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee of Royal Breffni Tours or The Crystal Maze, there are two procedures to put in place:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child
- The internal disciplinary procedure for dealing with the employee.

In the case of the allegation being against an employee of, the same person will not deal with both the child and the alleged abuser. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately. The designated liaison person will follow the normal reporting procedure set out by in this policy. It will be the responsibility of the Director of Royal Breffni Tours/The Crystal Maze to deal with an employee against whom an allegation has been made. If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Director, Tusla will deal with all aspects relating to the Director. If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the designated liaison person, the deputy designated liaison person will deal with all aspects of the case, including the reporting procedure.



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If an allegation is made against an employee of Royal Breffni Tours or The Crystal Maze the following steps will be taken:

- The Director of Royal Breffni Tours will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the employee in accordance with company disciplinary procedures.
- The allegation will be assessed by the designated liaison person to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities, at this point. They may wish to contact Tusla for advice on the issue.
- The safety of the child is the first priority and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child is safe. The measures taken will be proportionate to the level of risk.
- Royal Breffni Tours and The Crystal Maze will ensure that no other children are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/guardians as appropriate. The measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children can include the following: suspension of duties of the person accused, re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children, working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation or other measures as deemed appropriate.
- If a formal report is being made the employer will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained.
- Royal Breffni Tours/The Crystal Maze will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- Royal Breffni Tours/The Crystal Maze will work in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and Tusla and any decisions on action to be taken in regard to the employee will be taken in consultation with these agencies.
- The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this period and Royal Breffni Tours/The Crystal Maze will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.
- In the case of an allegation being made against a volunteer the designated liaison person will deal with the issue as outlined in the steps above.

Dealing With Challenging Or Disruptive Behaviour

Employees who deal directly with children will be given guidance and training in dealing with difficult behaviour. Royal Breffni Tours/The Crystal Maze ensures that the safety and welfare of the children is a priority and that employees will deal sensitively and professionally with any difficult issues that may arise. Where instances of challenging or disruptive behaviour occur with a child, a record will be kept of this where the instance requires the intervention of an employee or



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where the safety and wellbeing of others are at risk. In a case of such behaviour, two employees/volunteers should be present in dealing with the situation. Employees who are present at the time, should complete the incident/accident report form (see appendix 3).

The report of the incident should include:

- The programme or activity which was happening at the time
- Date of Incident
- A record of what happened
- Details of who was involved
- Details of where and when it happened
- A record of any significant comments
- A record of any injury to person or property
- Details of how the situation was resolved or left.

IMPLEMENTING, MONITORING AND REVIEWING

Developing guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures is only one part in the process of safeguarding children. Implementation is an on-going process. Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures promotes accountability, learning, feedback and knowledge sharing. It is a continuous cycle of development, response to change, and review of policies, procedures and practices. The review process ensures areas of procedure and practice that are working well can be acknowledged and areas requiring improvement can be identified and addressed.

In developing our implementation process we are committed to the following:

- Continuous training and learning
- Encourage open communication and feedback from staff and customers
- On-going risk assessment
- Managing new identified risks
- Supervision and management
- Monitoring and evaluating
- Reviewing

As best practice we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every 24 months, or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation/national policy, or where problems in the implementation process arise. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed in January 2028



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APPENDIX 1

Child Protection and Safeguarding Training

I have received Child Protection and Safeguarding training at The Crystal Maze. I have read and understand their Child Safeguarding Statement and have access to their Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. I agreed to abide by the guideline outline in this policy. I can confirm that there is no reason why I should be considered unsuitable for working with children. I also agree to abide by the Crystal Maze Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____



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APPENDIX 2 Child Abuse

- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the parent/carer. The definitions of neglect and abuse presented in this section are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

NEGLECT

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.



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A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement



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- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions



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relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - » Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
 - » Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - » Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person



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An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm. All factors including environmental and community factors needs to be taken into consider when bringing concerns to the attention of Tusla.

Reasonable grounds for concern:

Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way

- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

Bullying

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the Internet and other personal devices.”



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Royal Breffni Tours will not tolerate any bullying behaviour by child or adults and will deal with any incidents immediately following the below guidelines:

- Listen calmly and uncritically to the report the child is making.
- Confirm that you are dealing with bullying behaviour.
- Remind the young person that it is not their fault; it is the person who is doing the bullying that has the problem.
- Tell the child not to respond to the bully as this can exacerbate the issue.
- Report the issue to the relevant authorities (the teacher/parent/manager)
- Serious issues should be reported to An Garda Síochána – legal issues include making inappropriate sexual suggestions, racist remarks or persistent bullying that is seriously damaging to the young person's wellbeing.



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APPENDIX 3 Incident / Accident Report Form

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Reported by: | |
| Date of Report: | |

Please tick one box:

Incident:

Accident:

| |
|---------------|
| Event Details |
|---------------|

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Date & Time | |
| Location | |
| Amount in Group | |
| Persons Name & Age | |
| Teachers Name | |
| School Name | |
| School Address | |

Detailed description of accident/incident

| |
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| |
|--|

Outcome

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Follow up Risk Assessment

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Signature of person making the report _____

Managers signature _____

Date _____