

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**  
**SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND**  
**[Last updated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018]**

**1. About**

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading-edge technologies and competitive enterprises in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). The Foundation also promotes and supports the study of, education in, and engagement with STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and, in particular, to the growth of the economy. In this context, SFI aims to create a safe, creative and fun environment where children can engage with SFI volunteers and SFI staff, where their welfare is paramount. SFI is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children while they are participating in events run by or on behalf of SFI. SFI adheres to the requirements of the [Children First Act 2015](#) (“CFA”) and the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 (“[Children First Guidance, 2017](#)”) developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and also requires those who run events on its behalf to do so.

SFI’s Education and Public Engagement (EPE) programme seeks to promote the awareness and engagement of the Irish public with STEM. This supports one of the four primary objectives outlined in the SFI Strategic Plan - Agenda 2020; Objective C: To have the most engaged and scientifically informed public. The mission of this programme is to catalyse, inspire and guide the best in STEM education and public engagement. This is done by supporting, developing and investing in the education and engagement STEM sector in Ireland; by extending capacity in this area and also exploring and encouraging novel means of public engagement and communications. We aim to increase interest in STEM among students, teachers and members of the public.

Some of the services which SFI provides fall within the meaning of the term ‘relevant service’ under the CFA. Schedule 1, paragraph 5 of the CFA describes relevant services. SFI has specific legal responsibilities under the CFA, including to prepare a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of their services, to prepare a ‘child safeguarding statement’ and to appoint a person to be a first point of contact in respect of SFI’s child safeguarding statement (a ‘relevant person’). SFI has appointed a Designated Liaison Person for child safeguarding in accordance with the Children First Guidance, 2017 who is also the relevant person for the purposes of the CFA.

**2. List of services being provided:**

SFI provides a range of directly managed programmes that engage children. SFI also delivers activities engaging families at a range of public events organised by third parties, such as the National Ploughing Championship. As part of its remit, SFI funds third parties that potentially engage children in research activity or develop and deliver STEM engagement activities with children as primary participants. To deliver the list of services outlined below, SFI engages the SFI EPE team, other SFI Staff as volunteers and a range of volunteers who are not directly employed by SFI. The list of relevant services is detailed below:

### ***Relevant Services Directly Managed by SFI:***

#### **I. Public Events and Festivals**

SFI directly manages Science Week and participates in a range of public events throughout the year. These include the Science Week Open Days and theatre events, the National Ploughing Championships, the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition and a range of career events. This is not an exhaustive list. At these events SFI recruits and coordinates the attendance of a mix of SFI staff, SFI non-employee volunteers, SFI funded researchers and sometimes non-funded partners participate. The events and festivals require volunteers to assist in hosting a stand. This involves directing people around the stand and speaking to children and their guardians about STEM career experiences. It can involve guiding children through workshop activities where they design or make objects. To engage students with our relevant websites, competitions may be run where prizes are awarded for correctly answering questions.

#### **II. In-Classroom Events**

SFI directly manages activity that involves SFI staff and SFI volunteers engaging with children in primary and post primary school classrooms. In this case, SFI has been responsible for coordinating the visit to the school, as opposed to funding a partner activity to engage with the school. SFI as a funding organization of activity is discussed below.

#### **III. Online Queries and Photos**

Queries from websites such as [www.smartfutures.ie](http://www.smartfutures.ie), [www.sfi.ie](http://www.sfi.ie), [www.esero.ie](http://www.esero.ie) and [www.primaryscience.ie](http://www.primaryscience.ie) are directly linked to general email within the EPE team. Typical queries from children could be enquiries to have a role model speaker visit their school, or where to look for work experience. Where further contact is required, a standard reply is formulated to request the child to engage their teacher/guardian to contact SFI on their behalf. Where a general query is received from a child, links to relevant websites may be sent from the general email. As part of the promotion of SFI in the media and across other associated social media channels, photographs/video footage of children can be used if parental consent has been obtained. Where a child's image or footage of a child is taken, children will be identified by their full name or, if children are named alongside their school name, only their first name is provided.

#### **IV. Transition Year and Student Work Experience Placements, internal to SFI**

SFI supports developing the potential of children and young people. In this context SFI facilitates the placement of post primary students, particularly those in Transition Year (TY). These students are under 18 and fall within the definition of a child.

### ***Relevant Activities Funded by SFI, as a funding organisation:***

#### **V. Engagement projects funded by SFI through a research or SFI Discover grant**

SFI wants to help people to consider, question and debate the key issues in science and society and in support of this, provides funding through a range of SFI research grants. This includes the SFI Discover Programme, which provides funding specifically for education and public engagement projects. The SFI Research Centres Programme was formed in alignment with SFI's Agenda 2020 objective to develop a set of world-leading, large-scale research centres that will provide major economic impact for Ireland.

SFI Research Centres are required to draw parallels with SFI's objectives and as such, manage their own bespoke Education and Public Engagement programme. There are researchers engaged in STEM awareness activity across the remaining SFI research grant programmes. In some cases, researchers may be conducting research where children are participants. SFI does not accept responsibility for the management of volunteers or staff that participate in these activities where SFI is not the 'provider of the service', as defined by the Act. It is the responsibility of the Organising Body to ensure that they are compliant with all applicable law. However, going forward, SFI will explicitly require applicants for grants or funding from SFI to comply with the provisions of the CFA and guidance on child safeguarding issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla in SFI's grant terms and conditions. Existing recipients of funding from SFI will be contacted shortly after the implementation of SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement informing them that SFI expects that they comply with the CFA if it is applicable to their activities and informing them that SFI will seek assurance of their compliance, within a timeframe to be specified. When SFI's general grant terms and conditions are next updated (it is anticipated this this will be in December 2018), this requirement will be formally extended to existing recipients of SFI funding.

#### VI. Partner activity (non-funded)

As part of the Smart Futures programme, partners coordinate volunteer visits to schools, site visits and workshops. As part of the [www.smartfutures.ie](http://www.smartfutures.ie) website, our volunteer partner's logo and link to their website are displayed. The Science Week programme encourages local partnerships with for example, libraries, county councils and community centres. SFI expects compliance by relevant non-funded partners with the principles laid down by the CFA. SFI will be making contact with its non-funded partners shortly after the implementation of SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement to seek assurance that their non-funded partners comply with the CFA if it is applicable to their activities. Without this compliance, SFI will no longer endorse the partner activity.

#### VII. Commissioned work/sub-contractors

An EPE event that is managed by SFI can require the engagement of sub-contractors. SFI requires parties/subcontractors commissioned in this context to comply with the provisions of the CFA, if applicable. This is reflected in the request for tender for any such work.

### 3. Risk assessment

Section 11 of the CFA mandates that providers of relevant services must prepare a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of such services.

Section 2 of the Act defines harm as follows:

*"harm means in relation to a child –*

- (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, omission or circumstances or otherwise."*

Under Section 2 of the Child Care Act 1991 a "child" means a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1	Child is harmed by an SFI staff member, SFI volunteer or other person, while availing of our services or services supported by SFI.	<p><i>General</i></p> <p>(a) All SFI staff and SFI volunteers will complete the induction briefing on the Child Safeguarding Statement, which is informed by the Children First e-learning training and incorporates training on the recognition of harm;</p> <p>(b) SFI staff and SFI volunteers will be vetted in accordance with SFI's Garda Vetting Policy;</p> <p>(c) SFI have appointed a Designated Liaison Person from the HR team. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training and information is provided to staff regarding SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement. The EPE team is responsible for delivering an appropriate briefing on SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement to SFI volunteers, before participation. The EPE team will work closely with the Designated Liaison Person to ensure that staff and volunteer induction materials are relevant and up to date and will be responsible for delivering the briefing to SFI volunteers.</p>
2	The nature of the activity, or other material to which a child is exposed, may be inappropriate and potentially harmful.	<p>(d) A record of the induction briefing provided to SFI staff members will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person and a record of induction briefings provided to SFI volunteers will be maintained by the EPE team. These records will include written confirmation that SFI staff members/ SFI volunteers agree to adhere to SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct;</p> <p>(e) Where competitions are run on behalf of SFI, parent/teacher contact details are requested and parental consent to entry to the competition is obtained;</p> <p>(f) SFI iPads/other IT devices at public events are pin-coded and used under supervision;</p> <p>(g) SFI obtain parental consent to take photographs and/or video footage of children. Individual or group photographs/or video footage of children is not permitted in the absence of this consent being obtained. Where a child's photograph or footage of a child is taken, children will be identified by their full name or, if children are named alongside their school name, only their first name is provided;</p> <p>(h) Clear signs will be placed in areas where filming or photographs are taking place, notifying persons in the area of this fact;</p> <p>(i) If a child is missing or found at an event managed by SFI,</p>

staff members/volunteers should inform the event organisers immediately;

- (j) Queries from websites such as [www.smartfutures.ie](http://www.smartfutures.ie), [www.sfi.ie](http://www.sfi.ie), [www.esero.ie](http://www.esero.ie) and [www.primaryscience.ie](http://www.primaryscience.ie) are directly linked to general email within the EPE team. Typical queries from children could be an enquiry to have a role model speaker visit their school, or where to look for work experience. Where further contact is required, a standard reply is formulated to request the child to engage their teacher/guardian to contact SFI on their behalf. Where a general query is received from a child, links to relevant websites may be sent from the general email by a member of the EPE team.

*TY and Student Work Experience Placements*

- (k) TY students will be given an induction briefing which will incorporate training on SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and they will be requested to confirm their understanding of these policies by signing them. The signed policies will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person;
- (l) HR will refresh the staff member supervising the student on SFI's child safeguarding policies;
- (m) SFI has web filtering software in place and students working within SFI will be reminded of the acceptable usage and social media policies;
- (n) SFI will assign work that is deemed appropriate for the student;

*Specific to public events*

- (o) All SFI staff and SFI volunteers are given a verbal or electronic refresher briefing on SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct by the EPE team in advance of an SFI managed event;
- (p) At events directly managed by SFI, SFI will have oversight of the content to ensure it is appropriate;

*Specific to in-classroom events*

- (q) All SFI staff and SFI volunteers attending a school must be

		<p>accompanied by a teacher or other person assigned by the school to supervise the class at all times and should not allow themselves to be left unattended with children;</p> <p>(r) All SFI staff and SFI volunteers are asked to consider SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement when reviewing and selecting material for an in-classroom event appropriate for the intended audience;</p> <p><i>Funded/commissioned activities</i></p> <p>(s) An EPE event that is managed by SFI can require the engagement of sub-contractors. SFI will require parties/subcontractors commissioned in this context to comply with the provisions of the Children First Act 2015, if applicable.</p> <p>(t) Parties carrying out commissioned/sub-contractor/funded activity at such an event will be required to meet with an EPE team member to be briefed about SFI's child safeguarding policies.</p> <p><i>Partner activity (non-funded)</i></p> <p>(u) SFI expects compliance by relevant non-funded partners with the principles laid down by the CFA. SFA will be making contact with its non-funded partners shortly after the implementation of SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement to seek assurance that their non-funded partners comply with the CFA if it is applicable to their activities. Without this compliance, SFI will no longer endorse the partner activity.</p>
3	<p>A child discloses to an SFI staff member or SFI volunteer that they are being harmed by persons either within or outside SFI and this disclosure is not appropriately reported to the Designated Liaison Person or Tusla.</p>	<p>(a) SFI has developed a guide for SFI staff and volunteers for reporting child welfare and protection concerns;</p> <p>(b) If any disclosures of harm are made to an SFI staff member or volunteer they should contact the Designated Liaison Person as a matter of urgency to seek advice on any necessary steps to take.</p>

SFI considers the likelihood of any of the risks set out above occurring to be low in light of the policies and procedures it has in place.

#### **4. Procedures:**

- 4.1 Procedure for raising a complaint
- 4.2 Procedure for the management of allegations of harm to a child availing of our services
- 4.3 Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of SFI staff members or SFI volunteers to work with children
- 4.4 Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- 4.5 Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to the Designated Liaison Person and Tusla
- 4.6 Procedure for maintaining a list of persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons
- 4.7 Procedure for appointing a relevant person under the CFA

#### **SFI's Designated Liaison Person and relevant person under the CFA is:**

##### **Una Clifford | SFI HR**

Wilton Park House, Wilton Place, Dublin 2 D02 NT99

Telephone: +353 1 607 3200

Email: [childrenfirst@sfi.ie](mailto:childrenfirst@sfi.ie)

**All procedures listed above are available upon request.**

## **5. Implementation:**

We recognise 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 Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on the 09<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, or as soon as practicable after any legislative changes which arise in the area of child protection, any changes to SFI's services or any material change in any matter to which the statement refers.



## Appendix 1

### SFI's Child Protection Policy

#### Policy Summary

Science Foundation Ireland is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children while they are participating in events run by or on behalf of Science Foundation Ireland. Our aim is to create a safe, creative and fun environment where children and young people across all levels can engage with STEM volunteers and where their welfare is paramount. To realise this aim, we will adhere to the recommendations of [Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#), published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

#### Science Foundation Ireland undertakes to:

- Treat children with care, respect and dignity;
- Ensure communication with children is open and clear;
- Assess the risks posed to children when undertaking activities;
- Ensure volunteers never spend time alone with children away from other adults;
- Recognise that all children have a right to protection from harm or abuse;
- Ensure best practice in the recruitment of staff or volunteers, which includes good HR practices in interviewing, induction training, probation, Garda vetting (where required);
- Provide guidance for staff and volunteers, who may have grounds for concern about the welfare of children involved;
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

#### Contact

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to promote the protection of children (under 18) and to comply with this policy. Please contact [childrenfirst@sfi.ie](mailto:childrenfirst@sfi.ie) to discuss any aspect of our Child Protection Policy.

This policy will be reviewed by Science Foundation Ireland on at least a bi-annual basis and in light of experience, any legislative changes which arise in the area of child protection, or any changes to SFI's services.

This document was last updated 09/03/2018.

## Appendix 2

### SFI's Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

SFI staff and SFI volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of the Science Foundation Ireland's programmes and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of SFI, volunteers and staff members are expected to adhere to the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct when engaging with children.

#### Volunteers will:

- Follow all SFI policies and procedures that apply to their role and commit to delivering content in an appropriate manner, relevant to the audience;
- Review and comply with SFI's Child Protection Policy, Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and SFI's Child Safeguarding Statement;
- Prepare for the volunteer role by reviewing briefing materials and the SFI Child Safeguarding Statement, reviewing presentation materials and referencing websites' resources;
- Wear clothes appropriate to their responsibilities; they should be clean and tidy at all times;
- Report for their volunteer role in a timely manner and free from influence of alcohol and drugs;
- Show respect and consideration at all times for fellow volunteers and members of the public;
- Encourage a young person with positive words at all times;
- Contact the relevant supervisor/event organiser in the event of a lost child to ensure they are re-connected with their parent/guardian;
- Keep staff informed of progress, concerns and problems with the role;
- Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as representatives of Science Foundation Ireland;
- Avoid activity that could be considered detrimental to Science Foundation Ireland and which could specifically result in personal injury to themselves, other volunteers or a member of the public;
- Report any accidents, incidents or injuries involving children while volunteering to the Designated Liaison Person;
- Where there is immediate risk to a child, inform Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

The nature of volunteering with Science Foundation Ireland means that volunteers will come in contact with young people (less than 18 years of age). It is important that volunteers should not be in a situation where they are left alone with a young person.

#### Volunteers will not:

- Physically touch a young person (handshakes are acceptable);
- Contact a young person directly in any way (via email, text, befriend on social media, phone or arrange to meet in person after the activity);
- Take photos/videos of a young person unless their parent has completed an SFI approved consent form;
- Use vulgar or inappropriate language, or make remarks that could be considered offensive;
- Discriminate on the grounds of race (including skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin), religion, sex, age, civil status, family status, disability, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community;

- Take any action which could harm or threaten the health or safety of themselves, a child, a young person, other volunteers or members of the public.

This document was last updated 09/03/2018. For more info please contact [childrenfirst@sfi.ie](mailto:childrenfirst@sfi.ie)

## Appendix 3

### Contact Details for SFI's Designated Liaison Person

#### **Child Safeguarding**

Science Foundation Ireland is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children while they are participating in events run by or on behalf of Science Foundation Ireland. We adhere to the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and guidance on child safeguarding issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla. If you wish to request a copy of our child safeguarding statement or have a query or concern about child safeguarding with regard to any of our activities, please contact our Designated Liaison Person for child safeguarding (name and contact details below).

#### **SFI's Designated Liaison Person is:**

Una Clifford | SFI HR  
Wilton Park House, Wilton Place, Dublin 2 D02 NT99  
**Telephone:** +353 1 607 3200  
**Email:** [childrenfirst@sfi.ie](mailto:childrenfirst@sfi.ie)

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## Appendix 4

### Child Protection and Welfare Report Form

[Available at: [http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child\\_Protection\\_and\\_Welfare\\_Report\\_Form\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.pdf)]