



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Child Protection Policy

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Approval:

This document requires the following approvals:

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Approved By:	Governing Body
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Quality Assurance:

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Approved by:	Governing Body
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This Policy was approved by the Approving Authority **on 19 June 2023**. It shall be reviewed and, as necessary, amended by the University every two years or if there has been a material change to any legislation or national guidelines informing this policy area. All amendments shall be recorded on the revision history section above.

Note: Prior to publication and dissemination of policies and procedures, documents must be reviewed for accessibility as part the University's commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Further advice on accessibility can be obtained from the EDI Team.

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1. Introduction

The Children First Act 2015 places specific obligations on organisations that provide services to children, young people, and vulnerable adults, including the requirement to:

- Keep them safe from harm while they are using the services of the organisation.
- Carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while receiving services.
- Develop a *Child Safeguarding Statement* that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.
- Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.

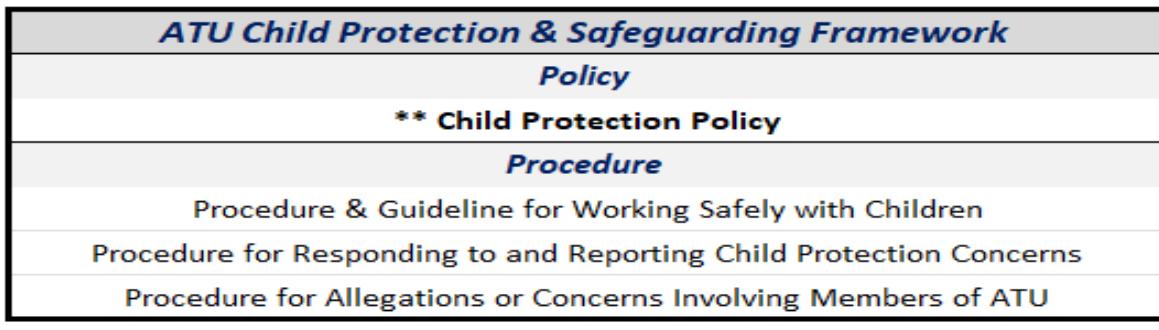
The policy detailed herein, along with related procedures is designed to ensure the University meets these obligations.

2. Purpose

This policy promotes best practice in child protection within Atlantic Technological University and establishes a procedural framework to ensure that:

- i) The University protects and safeguards children and vulnerable adults under its care or supervision.
- ii) University members can respond to child protection issues confidently and knowledgeably.
- iii) Management is equipped to make appropriate decisions if specific child protection concerns arise.

This document** is part of a suite of university documents provided to give clear direction and guidance to all members of the ATU community in relation to meeting their statutory obligations, and in how to implement (non-statutory) best practice guidance in respect of child safeguarding and protection:



3. Definitions

Child: The Children First Act 2015 defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.

Vulnerable Adult: A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may require assistance to care for themselves, or to protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

Where an ATU policy or procedure refers to a child (or children), that reference applies equally to a vulnerable person (or vulnerable persons), as per the definitions above.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- i) all ‘units’ of the University and members thereof (including academic units (faculties, schools and departments), research centres, professional, technical and service units), as well as university campus companies and subsidiaries.
- ii) all University employees and students who may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults – whether on campus, off campus, or online – as part of their duties, or in fulfilment of the requirements of their programmes of study.
- iii) All officers of the Student Union, including those engaging in Union activity in a voluntary capacity.
- iv) all external parties (including agents, contractors, and volunteers) who operate at any time within a campus of ATU.

4.1 External Reference Documents

The principal legislative and regulatory documents informing this policy are:

- Children First Act 2015, and
- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Tusla, 2017)

Atlantic Technological University falls within the definition of an organisation that provides relevant services to children as outlined in Schedule 1 of the *Children First Act 2015*.

Other legislation relevant to child protection and safeguarding includes:

- Criminal Justice Act 2006

- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 – 2016
- General Data Protection Regulation EU 2016/679 (GDPR)
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses) Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the University community have responsibilities in respect of child protection and safeguarding. Statutorily, the following key roles shall be assigned to designated staff members:

5.1.1 Relevant Person

In line with best practice as outlined in the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Tusla, 2017), ATU shall appoint a relevant person. The relevant person (for child protection) has lead responsibility for development and compliance and for ensuring that policy and procedures are consistent with best practice as detailed in the 2017 guideline. The Relevant Person for ATU Child Protection shall be appointed by the President.

The ‘relevant person’ for child protection at Atlantic Technological University is named in Appendix 1 of this policy document.

5.1.2 Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement and is responsible for dealing with all child protection related matters

at ATU. The DLP is a person nominated by ATU to act as the liaison person for the University in dealings with the Child and Family Agency, TUSLA and / or An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations and / or concerns about child protection. (Note: The Designated Liaison Person will / can also be the ‘Relevant Person’).

The name and contact details of the DLP shall be included in the ATU Child Safeguarding Statement. The Designated Liaison Person for ATU Child Protection shall be appointed by the President. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Atlantic Technological University is named in Appendix 1 of this policy document.

5.1.3 Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPs)

The President shall appoint an appropriate number of Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPs), and at least one per university campus. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person for each campus will liaise with the University’s Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in dealing with allegations of and / or concerns about child protection at the campus at which they are designee. Additionally, all DDLPs should be capable of taking over the role of the Designated Liaison Person in their absence. The Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPs) for Atlantic Technological University are named in Appendix 1 of this policy document.

5.1.4 Mandated Persons

Certain categories of staff are mandated persons under the 2015 Act and have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed the threshold of harm, as defined in the Children First Act 2015, to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

The University’s Human Resources function shall maintain a list of staff classed as mandated persons and will ensure that these staff members understand their responsibilities.

The University’s Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and all Deputy Designated Liaison Persons

(DDLPs) shall also be classified as mandated persons and must therefore report all child protection concerns that exceed the ‘threshold of harm’ directly to Tusla.

5.1.5 ATU Child Protection Committee

ATU shall establish a Child Protection Committee (CPC) whose terms of reference shall include:

1. Monitoring the University’s child protection and safeguarding arrangements to ensure they are effective and fit for purpose.
2. Monitoring the external legislative and regulatory environment for child protection to ensure the University remains compliant.
3. Raising awareness of child protection and safeguarding issues among staff and students and promoting training in this area.
4. Periodically reporting to the university's senior management team on the activities above, and on any safeguarding issues or concerns that have been raised.

The CPC shall be chaired by the ‘Relevant Person’ named in Appendix 1 of this policy document, and will have the following additional members:

- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the University and all Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPs)
- A Senior Manager with responsibility for Health & Wellbeing
- Two Senior Academic Manager (Head of Faculty or Head of School, and a Head of Department)
- A Human Resources Manager
- A Student Services Manager

- A Functional Area Manager or Nominee: Library
- A Functional Area Manager or Nominee: IT Services
- A Senior Representative from the Students Union
- Other(s), optionally, with due regard to individual expertise that may complement and / or augment the collective skillset and expertise of the CPC.

6. Policy

The University recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate many aspects of university life and therefore must be reflected in its policies, procedures, and practices, where relevant.

6.1 Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin ATU's child protection policy:

- i) The safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a core value of the University.
- ii) We believe that children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to, and to have their welfare taken into consideration in all decisions affecting them.
- iii) We have a duty to protect and safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults from any form of abuse. This duty applies to all staff, students, volunteers, and others contracted to the University.

- iv) We will fully comply with statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children.
- v) We will fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters.

6.2 Child Safeguarding Statement

As per the requirement of the 2015 Act, ATU shall develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that specifies the services being provided by the University and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of these services is safe from harm. ATU's Child Safeguarding Statement shall set out any potential risk of "harm" to a child that has been identified in our risk assessment, along with the procedures in place to reduce the identified risks.

6.3 Working Safely with Children

The University shall develop guidance for working safely with children, and a procedure for reporting any accidents or incidents involving children.

All University Units must ensure that:

- i) all University child protection procedures are adopted and fully implemented by the Unit.
- ii) A risk assessment is completed in respect of activities and / or events involving children. A *Risk Assessment Template (Child Protection & Safeguarding)* is available for this purpose.

- iii) employees and students being placed in outside agencies and organisations inform themselves of that agency's or organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- iv) best practice guidelines are adhered to in the recruitment of employees or volunteers.
- v) University members,
 - a) avail of appropriate training where necessary.
 - b) follow the relevant reporting procedures (as outlined in related procedure doc(s) – link / reference), where they have reasonable grounds for concern about the safety and welfare of any child involved in any service provided by ATU.
 - c) fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection matters.
 - d) comply with confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters

6.4 Guidance for Safeguarding and Protecting Children

The University shall provide guidance and related safeguarding procedures for:

- i) dealing with disclosures related to child protection and welfare.
- ii) dealing with adult disclosures of childhood abuse.
- iii) dealing with any allegations of abuse against staff / students / volunteers / others.

Guidance on record-keeping, confidentiality and information sharing shall also be included in the University's child safeguarding procedures.

6.5 Responding to and Reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

The University shall develop a reporting procedure that clearly outlines the steps to be followed in reporting child protection and welfare concerns.

6.6 Training

All units operating within ATU must ensure that all employees associated with the unit are familiar with this policy and with its associated documents and procedures listed in section 5 below. It is recommended that all ATU employees who may have potential contact with children and / or vulnerable adults complete training in the area of child protection; for example, the '*Children First E-Learning Programme*' developed by Tusla (in consultation with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the Health Service Executive), and freely accessible at <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/> and on the Tusla website.

6.7 Sharing and Communication

This policy and associated procedures, along with the ATU Child Safeguarding Statement will be available to all staff members. The ATU Child Safeguarding Statement will be displayed in a prominent place in each ATU campus and will be available to parents and guardians, Tusla and members of the public upon request.

6.8 Monitoring and Reviewing

This Policy will be reviewed every two years and / or as soon as is practicable after there has been a material change to any legislation or national guidelines informing this policy area.

7. Associated Documents Generated by this Policy

Child Safeguarding Statement

Procedure & Guideline for Working Safely with Children

Procedure for Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Procedure for Allegations or Concerns Involving Members of ATU

List of Mandated Persons employed by ATU (audit document maintained by ATU HR Dept)

Risk Assessment Template (Child Protection & Safeguarding)

Appendix 1: ATU Personnel with Designated Responsibilities for Child Protection

Relevant Person (as defined in Children First Act 2015)

The 'relevant person' for child protection at Atlantic Technological University is:

Name	Position	Location	Contact
Michele Glacken	Registrar & Vice President Students, Teaching & Learning	Sligo, Ash Lane	michele.glacken@atu.ie

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Atlantic Technological University is:

Name	Position	Location	Contact
Michele Glacken	Registrar & Vice President Students, Teaching & Learning	Sligo, Ash Lane	michele.glacken@atu.ie

Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPs)

Further to the approval of this draft policy, the President shall assign duties of Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) to one or more individuals for each campus of ATU. Those assignees will be named hereunder in the (final) published policy:

Name	Position	Location	Contact
TBC	TBC	Connemara	TBC
TBC	TBC	Donegal (Killybegs)	TBC
TBC	TBC	Donegal (Letterkenny)	TBC
TBC	TBC	Galway (Dublin Road)	TBC
TBC	TBC	Galway (Wellpark Road)	TBC
TBC	TBC	Mayo	TBC
TBC	TBC	Mountbellew	TBC
TBC	TBC	Sligo (Ash Lane)	TBC
TBC	TBC	Sligo (St. Angela's)	TBC