



Version: 2.2

Approved by: Jillian Twomey

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Supersedes: Safeguarding Policy 2022

1. Policy statement

Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. accepts its legal and moral obligation to provide a duty of care to every child and young person who uses our services, and to safeguard and promote their welfare. The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in everything we do.

We provide our services without discrimination on any of the nine grounds set out in the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

Throughout this policy, a “child” or “young person” means a person under the age of 18 years, other than a person who is or has been married (Child Care Act 1991, as amended; Children First Act 2015).

This policy applies to everyone involved in the operation of Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. — proprietors, employees, self-employed instructors and coaches, contractors, volunteers and yard helpers, students on placement and work experience, and anyone else acting on our behalf. Compliance is mandatory. Failure to comply will be addressed without delay and may result in dismissal, termination of engagement or exclusion from the premises.

2. Legal and policy framework

This policy is made under, and must be read alongside, the following legislation and guidance:

Legislation

- Children First Act 2015 — the principal statute governing child safeguarding in the State. It requires providers of a “relevant service” to carry out a written risk assessment, prepare and display a Child Safeguarding Statement and appoint a relevant person; and it imposes personal statutory reporting duties on “mandated persons”.
- Child Care Act 1991, as amended — including the duty of Tusla to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection.
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016 — statutory Garda vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children.
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 — immunity from civil liability for persons who report child abuse reasonably and in good faith, and protection from penalisation for employees who do so.
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 — it is a criminal offence to fail to disclose information about a serious offence against a child to An Garda Síochána.
- Children Act 2001, as amended.
- Equal Status Acts 2000–2018.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Guidance and codes

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), together with the 2019 Addendum on online safety and the April 2025 Addendum, Dealing with Adult Retrospective Disclosures of Childhood Abuse.
- Tusla, Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2nd edition).
- Sport Ireland and Sport NI, Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport.
- Horse Sport Ireland Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Youths and Vulnerable Persons in Our Sport, together with the HSI codes of conduct for coaches, athletes, parents/guardians and volunteers.
- Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. Social Media, Photography and Online Communication Policy, which carries the detailed rules on our own accounts, moderation, consent and images.

Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. fully adopts the Horse Sport Ireland Code of Ethics and the HSI codes of conduct. Where any provision of this policy conflicts with law or with HSI or Sport Ireland requirements, those requirements take precedence.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure robust safeguarding arrangements are in operation so that children and young people at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. are safe and protected, and can take part in a fun, safe environment in an atmosphere of fair play.
- To take all reasonable and practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment, and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- To ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding, and is given appropriate training to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns.
- To ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of any concern or allegation, and that support is provided to the person who raises or discloses it. All concerns and allegations of poor practice or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly. It is not our role to decide whether abuse has taken place — that is a matter for Tusla and An Garda Síochána — but it is everyone's responsibility to report it.
- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with data protection law.
- To maintain high standards of behaviour and good practice through compliance with the Horse Sport Ireland codes of conduct.

4. Child Safeguarding Statement and risk assessment

The provision of coaching, instruction, training and recreational activity to children is a relevant service under Schedule 1 of the Children First Act 2015. Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. engages employees, contractors and volunteers to carry out that work and is therefore a provider of a relevant service. We are legally required to:

- carry out a written assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service;
- prepare a written Child Safeguarding Statement specifying the service provided, the risks identified and the procedures in place to manage them;
- appoint a relevant person as the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement;
- display the Child Safeguarding Statement in a prominent place at the premises, furnish it to every member of staff, and provide a copy on request to any parent or guardian, to Tusla, or to any member of the public; and
- review the Child Safeguarding Statement at intervals of not more than 24 months, and as soon as practicable after any material change.

Tusla maintains a public register of non-compliance for providers who fail to furnish a Child Safeguarding Statement when requested.

Our Child Safeguarding Statement is at Annex A. The written risk assessment on which it is based is held as a separate document and is reviewed at the same time. Annex B maps each risk identified in the risk assessment to the section of this policy that addresses it.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The provider

Jillian Twomey, as proprietor, holds overall responsibility for child safeguarding at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd., including for the preparation, display and review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

5.2 Relevant Person

The Relevant Person is the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement. Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. has appointed **Kenneth Twomey** as Relevant Person.

5.3 Designated Liaison Person and Deputy

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for receiving safeguarding concerns and reporting them to Tusla and An Garda Síochána as required. Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. has appointed **Kennet Twomey** as DLP.

The role of the DLP is:

- To be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents or guardians on any issue concerning safeguarding, child protection or welfare, poor practice or alleged abuse.
- To ensure that everyone working at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. is aware of this policy, the Child Safeguarding Statement, the associated procedures and the applicable codes of conduct, and adopts them.
- To hold current contact details for the local Tusla duty social work service, An Garda Síochána and the Horse Sport Ireland National Children's Officer.
- To assess whether a concern raised meets the threshold for reporting, seeking informal advice from a Tusla duty social worker where necessary, and to make reports to Tusla without delay where it does.
- To record every concern, the action taken and the reasons for it, including where a decision is taken not to report.
- To inform the Horse Sport Ireland National Children's Officer of any allegation or complaint relating to child protection or safeguarding, and to follow HSI's procedures.
- To ensure that clients under 18 and their parents or guardians know who the DLP is and how to contact them, and how to access this policy.
- To promote and facilitate safeguarding training for staff and volunteers.
- To ensure that safe recruitment and Garda vetting procedures are followed for all relevant work.
- To maintain and keep under review the list of persons at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. who are mandated persons.
- To ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.

It is not the role of the DLP to be a child protection expert, to investigate, or to decide whether abuse has taken place. The role is to record the details, seek guidance where necessary, and report.

5.4 Mandated persons

Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 designates as a mandated person any person employed as a safeguarding officer, child protection officer or other person (however described) employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function of a sporting, recreational or other body offering services to children.

Where our DLP or Relevant Person is employed for that purpose, they are a mandated person. Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. maintains a list of mandated persons; the persons currently designated are **Kenneth Twomey**.

A mandated person has two statutory duties:

- to report to Tusla, without delay, any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being harmed, where the concern meets or exceeds the threshold of harm defined in the Act; and
- to assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern that has been the subject of a mandated report.

These duties rest personally with the mandated person and cannot be discharged on their behalf by anyone else. Where a mandated person is also the DLP, they must still fulfil their own statutory obligation. Best practice is for a mandated report to be made jointly by the mandated person and the DLP.

5.5 Everyone else

Every member of staff, instructor, coach, contractor, volunteer and yard helper is responsible for:

- behaving in accordance with the applicable code of conduct at all times;
- reporting any concern about a child, or any concern about the behaviour of an adult towards a child, to the DLP without delay;
- completing the safeguarding training required by this policy; and
- never attempting to investigate a concern themselves.

6. Recognising and reporting concerns

6.1 Types of abuse

Children First: National Guidance identifies four types of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time. Abuse may be caused by someone inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

6.2 Reasonable grounds for concern

Reasonable grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child that they were harmed; an account from a person who saw the child being harmed; evidence such as an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way; consistent indications over a period of time; or a concern about a child's welfare where a person's behaviour towards a child gives rise to it.

You do not need to be certain, and you do not need proof. You are not required to decide whether abuse has occurred.

6.3 What to do

- If a child is in immediate danger and cannot be protected, contact An Garda Síochána immediately on 999 or 112. Do not wait.
- Otherwise, report the concern to the DLP (or Deputy DLP) as soon as possible, and in any event the same day. Record what you observed or were told, in the child's own words where possible, with dates, times and names, and sign and date the record.
- The DLP will consider the concern, seek informal advice from a Tusla duty social worker if needed, and where the threshold is met will submit a Child Protection and Welfare Report Form to Tusla through

the Tusla Portal without delay. Where the Portal cannot be used, the report will be made to the Tusla duty social work service for the area in which the child resides.

- Where an adult discloses abuse they experienced as a child, the Retrospective Abuse Report Form is used, in accordance with the 2025 Addendum to Children First guidance. Such a disclosure may also indicate a current risk to other children and must be reported.
- Any mandated person with a concern meeting or exceeding the threshold of harm must make their own report to Tusla, jointly with the DLP where possible.
- Parents or guardians are normally told that a report is being made, unless doing so would place the child at further risk, compromise a Garda investigation, or is otherwise inappropriate. The DLP will take advice from Tusla where there is any doubt.
- The DLP will notify the Horse Sport Ireland National Children's Officer of any allegation or complaint relating to child protection.

6.4 Responding to a disclosure

- Listen. Do not interrupt, lead the child, or ask probing or investigative questions.
- Never promise to keep a disclosure secret. Explain, in age-appropriate terms, that you will have to tell someone whose job it is to help.
- Do not express shock, disbelief or judgement about the child or the person named.
- Record what was said as soon as possible afterwards, in the child's own words, and pass it to the DLP the same day.

6.5 Your right to report directly

Anyone may report a concern directly to Tusla or to An Garda Síochána. If you have a reasonable concern and the DLP decides not to report it, you remain entitled to make a report yourself, and no one at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. may prevent or discourage you from doing so.

A person who reports child abuse reasonably and in good faith is protected from civil liability and from penalisation by an employer under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998. Separately, it is a criminal offence under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to withhold information about a serious offence against a child from An Garda Síochána.

7. Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer

Where an allegation is made against a person working or volunteering at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd., two separate procedures run in parallel:

- the reporting procedure in section 6, in respect of the child; and
- our internal employment or engagement procedure (section 8), in respect of the person against whom the allegation is made.

Wherever possible, these will be handled by different people, so that the response to the child is not affected by the employment process. The safety of the child takes priority at all times.

Pending the outcome, the person concerned may be suspended from duty or have their duties restricted so that they have no unsupervised access to children. Any such step is a neutral, precautionary measure and does not imply any finding of wrongdoing. Advice will be sought from Tusla, An Garda Síochána and Horse Sport Ireland before any action that could prejudice an investigation.

8. Complaints and disciplinary procedure

A child protection concern is never dealt with as a complaint. If a complaint discloses, or begins to disclose, a concern about the safety or welfare of a child, it is passed to the DLP immediately and section

6 applies. Reporting to Tusla or An Garda Síochána is never delayed, paused or made conditional on the outcome of a complaints process.

8.1 Making a complaint

- Anyone — a child, a parent or guardian, a member of staff, a volunteer or a visitor — may raise a complaint about the conduct of any person at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd., or about how an issue has been handled.
- Many issues are resolved informally by speaking to the instructor or to the yard manager. Anyone who prefers to raise a matter formally, or who is not satisfied with an informal response, may do so.
- Formal complaints are made in writing to **Ken Twomey** at ken.twomey@hitchmoughs.ie. The HSI Code of Ethics Complaints Form may be used.
- Where the complaint concerns that person, it is made instead to the proprietor. Where it concerns the proprietor, it may be made directly to the Horse Sport Ireland National Children's Officer.
- Children are told, in terms they understand, who they can talk to if they are unhappy about anything. This is covered at induction, at the start of every camp, and is displayed at the premises.

8.2 How complaints are handled

- A formal complaint is acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.
- The person complained about is told what has been alleged and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- The complaint is normally concluded within 20 working days. Where this is not possible, the complainant is told why and given a revised timeframe.
- The outcome and the reasons for it are given in writing to the complainant and to the person complained about.
- A complainant who remains dissatisfied may appeal in writing to the proprietor within 10 working days, and may raise the matter with Horse Sport Ireland at any stage.
- A complainant is never penalised, excluded or treated less favourably for raising a concern in good faith.

8.3 Disciplinary action

Where a complaint or investigation establishes a breach of this policy or of an applicable code of conduct, the response is proportionate to the seriousness of the breach and may include an informal discussion, a written warning, additional training or supervision, restriction of duties, suspension, dismissal or termination of engagement, or exclusion from the premises.

Any disciplinary process will be fair: the person is told what is alleged, is given the evidence, has the opportunity to respond and to be accompanied, and has a right of appeal. Where the matter also involves a child protection concern, no disciplinary step will be taken that could prejudice a Tusla assessment or Garda investigation without first taking their advice.

8.4 Records

A written record of every formal complaint, the steps taken, the outcome and any disciplinary action is kept securely in accordance with section 16. Records of complaints with a child protection element are held with safeguarding records, separately from general client files.

9. Safe recruitment, Garda vetting and coaching qualifications

Instructors, coaches, staff, contractors and volunteers whose work at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. involves necessary and regular contact with children are carrying out relevant work under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016.

9.1 Garda vetting

- Garda vetting must be obtained and reviewed before the person begins relevant work. It is a criminal offence for a relevant organisation to permit a person to undertake relevant work without first receiving a vetting disclosure.
- Vetting is arranged through Horse Sport Ireland as the registered relevant organisation for equestrian sport. Vetting obtained through another organisation is not automatically transferable.
- Applicants aged 16 or 17 require the written consent of a parent or guardian before a vetting application can proceed.
- In line with Horse Sport Ireland and Sport Ireland policy, vetting is renewed every three years, and also whenever a person's role changes materially. A shorter interval will be applied where there is any reason to seek re-vetting sooner.
- Vetting disclosures are held securely, accessed only by those who need to see them, and retained only as long as necessary.

9.2 Recruitment

Garda vetting is one element of safe recruitment, not a substitute for it. For every role involving contact with children, whether paid, self-employed or voluntary, we require:

- a completed application form covering employment and volunteering history, with any gaps explained;
- proof of identity and address;
- evidence of relevant qualifications, verified with the awarding body where appropriate;
- at least two references, which are followed up directly and not accepted from family members;
- a signed copy of the applicable code of conduct and confirmation that this policy has been read; and
- an induction covering this policy, the Child Safeguarding Statement, the identity of the DLP and Deputy, and how to report a concern.

Everyone new to a role works under supervision during an agreed induction period. Roles, responsibilities and lines of reporting are set out in writing so that everyone knows what they are and are not expected to do.

9.3 Coaching qualifications

- Only coaches and instructors holding a current recognised qualification appropriate to the level and discipline being taught may instruct at Hitchmough Riding School Ltd..
- Qualifications, first aid certification and insurance are verified at the point of recruitment and re-checked at renewal. Copies are retained on file.
- Volunteers and yard helpers who do not hold a coaching qualification do not instruct, and work under the direction of a qualified instructor.
- Under-18 helpers are supervised at all times, are never given sole responsibility for other children, and are not counted towards adult supervision numbers.

10. Training

- All instructors, coaches, staff, contractors, volunteers and yard helpers who work with children must complete Sport Ireland Safeguarding 1 (Child Welfare and Protection Basic Awareness), delivered by Horse Sport Ireland or a Local Sports Partnership, before or as soon as possible after taking up their role, and in any event within their induction period.
- The Designated Liaison Person must additionally complete Sport Ireland Safeguarding 3 (Designated Liaison Person). Where a Children's Officer role is in place, that person must additionally complete Safeguarding 2 (Club Children's Officer).
- Safeguarding training must be refreshed every three years.

- A person who has completed equivalent training with another member body within the previous three years may have that recognised, on production of evidence.
- All staff and volunteers are encouraged to complete Tusla's free e-learning programme, Introduction to Children First. This is required for the DLP, Deputy DLP and any mandated person.
- Every person is briefed on this policy, the Child Safeguarding Statement and the reporting procedure at induction, and again whenever the policy is revised.
- A record of all training, including dates of completion and renewal due dates, is maintained by **Amanda Horgan - Administration** and reviewed at least annually.

11. Codes of conduct and good practice

Everyone involved with Hitchmough Riding School Ltd., in whatever capacity, must adhere to the applicable Horse Sport Ireland code of conduct and must sign to confirm that they will do so. Signed copies are retained on file. Codes of conduct for coaches, young riders, parents and guardians, and volunteers are available from Horse Sport Ireland and are issued at induction and at enrolment.

In particular:

- Avoid being alone with a child where you cannot be seen by others. Where one-to-one instruction is necessary, it takes place in an open, observable environment.
- Physical contact is limited to what is necessary for safety, instruction or the treatment of injury — for example assisting a rider to mount, adjusting a hat, girth or stirrup, or correcting position. Explain what you are doing and why, and seek the rider's agreement first.
- Do not transport a child alone in a vehicle (see section 13).
- Do not give a child a lift, gift, or preferential treatment that could be misinterpreted, and do not develop a relationship with a child that could be seen as favouritism.
- Do not use sarcasm, humiliation, shouting or physical punishment as a coaching method, and do not permit bullying between children to go unchallenged.
- If you accidentally hurt a child, cause distress, or find yourself in a situation that could be misinterpreted, report it to the DLP and record it at the time.

12. Supervision

- A named adult is in charge of every lesson, camp session and event, and is responsible for supervision throughout, including before the start and after the finish.
- Supervision numbers are set at **1:8**, consistent with our insurance requirements and the qualification held by the instructor in charge. Ratios are reduced where the group includes younger children, beginners or children with additional needs.
- Children are not left unsupervised on the yard, in stables, in the tack room, in feed or hay stores, or around machinery, horse walkers or lorries and trailers at any time.
- Areas not designated for children are kept closed or clearly marked, and children are not permitted in them without a supervising adult.
- Where children and adult clients use the premises at the same time, changing and toilet facilities are not shared. Adults do not use facilities designated for children, and children do not use adult changing areas.
- Adults do not supervise children while they are changing, and do not enter changing or toilet areas while a child is using them except in an emergency, in which case a second adult attends and the incident is recorded.
- A written register is taken for every camp and event. Children are signed in on arrival and signed out on collection by a named adult recorded on the registration form.

- Breaks, lunch periods and waiting time between activities are supervised to the same standard as the activity itself.
- Visitors, parents and spectators sign in, remain in designated areas, and are not left unsupervised with children who are not their own.

13. Camps, shows, events and transport

Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. runs camps and shows at our own premises. We do not currently run overnight activities or away trips. If that changes, this policy will be reviewed and Horse Sport Ireland guidance on away trips followed before any such activity takes place.

13.1 Before a camp or event

- A completed registration and consent form is held for every child before they take part. It records the child's name, date of birth, parent or guardian contact details, a second emergency contact, relevant medical information, allergies, and any medication to be administered.
- The form records the names of the adults authorised to collect the child. A child is not released to anyone not named on the form without direct confirmation from the parent or guardian.
- The form includes separate, specific consent for photography and use of images (section 15), and for emergency medical treatment.
- Parents and guardians are given the start and finish times, arrangements for drop-off and collection, what to bring, and the name and contact details of the adult in charge and of the DLP.

13.2 During a camp or event

- A register is taken at the start and at intervals during the day.
- Section 12 supervision arrangements apply throughout, including during breaks, lunch and any period when children are not mounted.
- A qualified first aider is present, and a first aid kit and accident report forms are accessible. The HSI Accident Report Form is used to record any injury.
- Medication is administered only with prior written consent, is stored securely, and its administration is recorded.

13.3 Transport

- Parents and guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from the premises, and for transport to any external show or event.
- Staff, contractors and volunteers do not transport a child in a private vehicle. Where transport is exceptionally unavoidable, it requires prior written consent from the parent or guardian, is never one adult alone with one child, and is recorded.
- Where a horsebox or lorry is used to transport horses to an event, children do not travel in it unaccompanied by their own parent or guardian.

14. Missing or uncollected child

14.1 A child cannot be found

- Alert the adult in charge immediately. Do not wait to see whether the child reappears.
- The adult in charge takes an immediate register of all other children and ensures they are gathered in one supervised place.
- A named adult searches the premises systematically — arenas, stables, tack room, feed and hay stores, wash bay, toilets and changing areas, viewing gallery, car park, lorry park, fields and gateways — while another remains with the group.

- If the child has not been found within 10 minutes, contact An Garda Síochána on 999 or 112 and the child's parent or guardian. Do not delay the call in order to keep searching.
- Continue searching while awaiting the Gardaí, and preserve the area where the child was last seen.
- Afterwards, the adult in charge records what happened, the times, who was involved and what was done, and reports it to the DLP. The incident is reviewed and the risk assessment updated where necessary.

14.2 A child is not collected

- The child stays at the premises, supervised. Two adults remain wherever possible. A child is never left alone, and is never taken to a staff member's home.
- The adult in charge contacts the parent or guardian, then the second emergency contact on the registration form.
- Reassure the child. Do not communicate anxiety or frustration to them, and do not discuss the situation in front of them.
- If no contact has been made after **one hour**, contact the Tusla duty social work service, or An Garda Síochána if outside office hours, and follow their direction.
- The incident is recorded and reported to the DLP. Repeated late or non-collection is treated as a possible welfare concern and considered under section 6.

14.3 An unknown child is found on the premises

- Stay with the child and alert the adult in charge. Do not take the child to an isolated area.
- Establish whether a parent or guardian is on site. If not, and the child is unaccompanied, contact An Garda Síochána.
- Record the incident and report it to the DLP.

15. Online safety, photography and communication

The 2019 Addendum to Children First: National Guidance requires online safety to be specifically addressed in child safeguarding arrangements.

This section is the authoritative statement of our rules on online communication, photography and images involving children. It is reproduced, with further operational detail on our own accounts and moderation, at section 7 of the Social Media, Photography and Online Communication Policy. Where the two differ, this section applies and the other policy is corrected at the next review.

- Staff, coaches and volunteers do not communicate privately with a child by text, direct message, social media or any other private channel. Communication is with the parent or guardian, or through an account or group to which a parent or guardian and a second adult have access.
- Written consent from a parent or guardian, and the agreement of the child, is obtained before any photograph or video of a child is taken or used. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.
- Images of children are not published with the child's full name, and are not published alongside personal details. Images are stored securely and used only for the purpose consented to.
- Personal mobile phones and cameras are not used to photograph children at the centre. Photography, filming and recording are not permitted in changing areas, toilets or any other private area, by anyone, at any time.
- At shows and open events, parents and spectators are told at the entrance and in the programme what our photography rules are, and that images of other people's children must not be posted online.
- Children and young people are reminded of the code of behaviour that applies to their own use of social media in connection with the centre, including that they should not post images of others without permission.

- Any concern about a child's online safety, or about online contact between an adult at the centre and a child, is reported to the DLP and treated as a safeguarding concern.

16. Records, confidentiality and data protection

- Records of safeguarding concerns, reports and actions are factual, contemporaneous, signed and dated, and stored securely and separately from general client records, with access restricted to the DLP, Deputy DLP and the provider.
- Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis and in the best interests of the child. Confidentiality is never a reason not to report a child protection concern. No one may promise a child that they will keep a disclosure secret.
- Personal data is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Safeguarding records are retained for governing body guidelines and then securely destroyed.
- Vetting disclosures, training records, verified qualifications and signed codes of conduct are retained for as long as the person is engaged with the centre, and thereafter in line with the retention schedule.
- Registration and consent forms are retained for the duration of the child's involvement and in line with the retention schedule thereafter.

17. Communication and availability

This policy and the Child Safeguarding Statement are made available to all staff, volunteers, clients under 18 and their parents or guardians, and are published on the Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. website. The Child Safeguarding Statement is also displayed in a prominent position at the premises.

The name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person are given to every new client under 18 and their parents or guardians at the point of booking, and are displayed at the premises alongside a plain-language notice telling children who they can talk to if they are worried about anything.

Routine communication with parents and guardians is by **email**. Personal accounts and personal phone numbers are not used. Group messaging for camps and events includes at least two adults from the centre.

18. Review

This policy, the Child Safeguarding Statement and the underlying risk assessment will be reviewed at intervals of not more than 24 months, as required by section 11(7) of the Children First Act 2015, and in any event:

- as soon as practicable after any material change to any matter to which the Child Safeguarding Statement refers;
- following any change in legislation or national guidance;
- as required by Tusla, Horse Sport Ireland or Sport Ireland; and
- following any safeguarding incident, complaint, missing child incident or other significant event.

The outcome of each review, including the date and the person who carried it out, is recorded.

19. Contacts

Hitchmough Riding School Ltd.

Designated Liaison Person: **Kenneth Twomey – 0858010394 – ken.twomey@hitchmoughs.ie**

Relevant Person (Child Safeguarding Statement): **Kenneth Twomey – 0858010394 – ken.twomey@hitchmoughs.ie**

Horse Sport Ireland

National Children's Officer / Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer: Paul Hayes — 045 854 524 — safeguarding@horsesportireland.ie

Vetting Liaison Person: Patricia Kennedy — 045 854 516

Safeguarding information and template forms: horsesportireland.ie/governance/child-welfare-safeguarding

Statutory services

An Garda Síochána — emergency: 999 or 112. Local station: Togher Garda Station – 021 4947120

Tusla — Child and Family Agency. Duty social work service for Cork South West: 021-4923001. Out of hours, contact 0818 776 315

Tusla Children First information, report forms and the Tusla Portal: tusla.ie/children-first

Sport Ireland safeguarding: sportireland.ie/ethics/safeguarding-sport

Annex A — Child Safeguarding Statement



Name of service

Hitchmough Riding School Ltd., Highland Lodge, Monkstown, Co. Cork, T12 PN52

Nature of the service and principles to safeguard children

Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. provides riding lessons, coaching, instruction, day camps and on-site shows and events to children and young people under 18. We are committed to safeguarding children by:

- recognising that the welfare of the child is paramount;
- ensuring all staff, contractors and volunteers are recruited safely, Garda vetted and trained;
- adopting and implementing the Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. Safeguarding Policy and the Horse Sport Ireland codes of conduct;
- appointing a Designated Liaison Person and Deputy, and reporting concerns to Tusla and An Garda Síochána as required by law; and
- keeping this statement and the underlying risk assessment under review.

Risk assessment

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, we have carried out a written assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our service. That assessment is held as a separate document and is available on request. The risks identified, and the procedures in place to manage them, are summarised at Annex B or the Safeguarding Policy (available on request)

Procedures

The following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service. All are set out in the Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. Safeguarding Policy and are available on request:

- Procedure for the mgmt. of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers or volunteers (s 7).
- Complaints and disciplinary procedure (section 8).
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers (section 9).
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information (section 10).
- Codes of conduct and good practice (section 11), supervision procedure (section 12).
- Procedures for camps, shows, events and transport (section 13).
- Missing or uncollected child procedure (section 14).
- Photography, use of images and online safety procedure (section 15).
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla (section 6).
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons in the service who are mandated persons (section 5.4).
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person (section 5.2).

Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. We are committed to implementing this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support it.

Relevant Person: **Kenneth Twomey – 0858010394 – ken.twomey@hitchmoughs.ie**

Designated Liaison Person: **Kenneth Twomey – 0858010394 – ken.twomey@hitchmoughs.ie**

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Jillian Twomey, Provider, Hitchmough Riding School Ltd.

Date of preparation: 28/08/2026 Date for review: 27/08/2028

Annex B — Risk assessment cross-reference

The Horse Sport Ireland risk assessment template asks, for each identified risk, which policy, guidance or procedure document addresses it. Hitchmough Riding School Ltd. does not maintain a separate document for each of those names. Most of the content sits in named sections of this policy; a small number of companion documents carry operational detail. This annex maps the document names used in the template to where that content is actually found.

Document name used in the HSI risk assessment	Where it is found in this policy
Coach Education Policy / Guidelines	Section 9.3 — Coaching qualifications; Section 10 — Training
Safeguarding Training Policy	Section 10 — Training
Recruitment Policy	Section 9 — Safe recruitment, Garda vetting and coaching qualifications
Supervision Policy	Section 12 — Supervision
Codes of Conduct / Code of Behaviour	Section 11 — Codes of conduct and good practice, adopting the HSI codes; Code of Conduct (separate signed document)
HSI Code of Ethics Document	Section 2 — adopted in full by reference
Photography and Use of Images Policy	Section 15; Social Media, Photography and Online Communication Policy, section 7.2 and Annex (model consent wording)
Policy on use of devices in private zones	Section 15; Social Media Policy, section 7.3
Complaints & Disciplinary policy / procedure	Section 8 — Complaints and disciplinary procedure; complaints route notice (displayed and in the enrolment pack)
Communications procedure	Section 17 — Communication and availability; Section 15; Social Media Policy, sections 4 to 7
Social media policy	Social Media, Photography and Online Communication Policy; Section 15 of this policy for the child-specific rules
Reporting procedures / policy	Section 6 — Recognising and reporting concerns; Safeguarding Concern Record Form; reporting flowchart (displayed)
Travel / Away trip policy	Section 13 — Camps, shows, events and transport
Permission forms	Section 13.1 and Annex C — HSI templates and the consent wording at the Annex to the Social Media Policy
Missing or found child policy	Section 14 — Missing or uncollected child
Child Safeguarding Statement	Annex A — displayed at the premises
Child Safeguarding Statement — display / distribute	Section 17 — Communication and availability

Certain rows in the HSI template are the responsibility of Horse Sport Ireland rather than of an individual centre — in particular the appointment of the NGB Mandated Person.

Annex C — Forms and records checklist

The following forms and records support this policy. Horse Sport Ireland publishes templates for several of them; use those rather than creating our own.

Forms in use

- Registration and consent form for camps, shows and lessons — child's details, parent/guardian and second emergency contact, medical information and allergies, medication consent, authorised collectors, photography consent, emergency medical treatment consent.
- Signed code of conduct — one for each of coaches and staff, volunteers, young riders, and parents/guardians.
- Accident Report Form — HSI template.
- Complaints Form — HSI Code of Ethics template.
- Safeguarding concern record form — used to record what was observed or disclosed, and passed to the DLP.
- Daily sign-in and sign-out register for camps and events.

Companion documents

- Code of Conduct — instructors, coaches, staff, contractors and volunteers, with signed declaration.
- Social Media, Photography and Online Communication Policy, including model consent wording.
- Raising a concern or making a complaint — display notice, young riders' notice and full version for the enrolment pack.
- Reporting a safeguarding concern — display copy for the office and tack room.
- Who does what — safeguarding roles cheat sheet.
- Safeguarding Concern Record Form and Safeguarding Concerns Log.
- Risk Assessment for the purposes of the Children First Act 2015.

Records maintained

- Garda vetting register — name, role, date of disclosure, date re-vetting due.
- Training register — name, course, date completed, date refresher due.
- Qualifications, first aid certification and insurance register, with expiry dates.
- List of mandated persons.
- Safeguarding concerns log, held securely and separately.
- Complaints log.
- Accident and incident log, including missing child and late collection incidents.
- Record of policy reviews, with dates and reviewer.