

Barnardos' vision is an Ireland where childhood is valued and all children and young people are cherished equally.

Barnardos' mission is to challenge and support families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focusing specifically on children and young people whose well-being is under threat.

Visit our website www.barnardos.ie
or contact our national office at:

Barnardos,
Christchurch Square,
Dublin 8.

T: 01 - 453 0355
E: info@barnardos.ie

Registered Charity 6015



A Guide for Parents/Carers



Introduction

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the guide to our services for parents and carers. In Barnardos, we want to support you in your important job as a parent/carer. We believe in working with you to make sure our family support services meet your family's needs. As Director of Children's Services, it is my job to make sure our services are the best they can be for you. This guide explains how we will support both you and your family.

Please tell us what you think of our services - if there are any changes you would like to suggest, please let us know.

Thank you,

Suzanne Connolly
Director of Children's Services



Barnardos

Barnardos believes that childhood should be valued and all children and young people should be cherished equally. To do this Barnardos will challenge and support families, communities, society and government to make Ireland the best place in the world to be a child, focusing specifically on children and young people whose well-being is under threat.

Our work is based on the belief that:

- All children have a right to reach their full potential
- Mothers, fathers and carers are the most important people in their children's lives
- Some children need help due to particular family difficulties such as bereavement, separation, poverty, experience of racism or discrimination, etc.
- Everyone will be treated fairly in our work

Barnardos respects and promotes the rights of the child guided by Irish, European and International law.



What we do

Mothers, fathers and carers are the most important people in their children's lives.

When you come to Barnardos, staff will meet you and talk to you about how we can help.

Some of the ways we help mothers, fathers and carers to care for their children is by providing:

- Staff who listen to and talk with you
- Opportunities to meet and talk with other parents or carers
- Advice, information and training around parenting
- Support to develop your relationship with your children
- Encouragement to help you build on your strengths as a parent or carer
- Groups and activities for your children

Our work with you is confidential, however information may be discussed with other agencies working with your family. Before sharing any information with others, we will make every effort to talk to you first.



How we make sure your child is protected

Your child has a right to be safe at all times.

We have rules for our staff and volunteers to make sure your children are safe. Your children are treated with respect and understanding at all times. This means:

- We provide a safe environment
- We listen to you and your children
- Your family's privacy will be respected
- We will help and support you to care for your children

If a member of staff is concerned that your child is at risk of:

- Physical harm - such as hitting, pinching, shaking
- Emotional harm - such as bullying
- Neglect - where children may not have enough warmth, food, proper housing or are being left alone
- Sexual abuse - where a child may see things or be touched in a way that is not acceptable

he/she will discuss it with you and a decision will then be made whether or not to contact the Social Work Department.

In an emergency we may have to contact the Social Work Department or Gardai before contacting you.

This is what we call our Child Protection Policy.





How we make sure everyone is treated fairly

We treat everyone with care and understanding.

Each of us is different in many ways. We think about and respect differences in:

- Ability to do things
- Age
- Family status
- Gender
- Marital status
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation

This is what we call our Equal Rights Policy.



What is my file and what is in it?

To support you and your family, we gather and record information in what we call your file.

This information may include:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Date of birth
- Who is in your family
- Reason for attending the service
- Any contact we have with you and your family
- Reports on our work with you (e.g. a report for a review meeting)
- Reports to and from other agencies (e.g. school reports)
- Attendance records

We keep this information in your file which is kept confidential and is stored in a securely locked filing cabinet.

We also keep some basic information about you and your children on our database (our computer system). The database is our way of collecting information about how many families we work with and the needs they have.

The records that we keep about you are protected by the Data Protection Act, and to see them all you have to do is ask.

This is what we call our Access to Records Policy.





What health and safety means to us

We will provide a healthy and safe environment for you and your family.

Children are encouraged to take care of their own toileting, hand-washing and dressing/undressing. Where children are unable to do this, parents or staff members will help them.

We provide food in our centres which we try to ensure is healthy and nutritious. Any special dietary requirements will be respected.

Children can only be collected by a parent/carer or a person who has been named by you. For your child's safety we will only let them leave with the person named by you.

We ask that children with head lice are treated. We will let all families know if there is an outbreak of head lice and ask that they check their own children.

Children who have diarrhoea, vomiting or high temperature must not attend services until they are better.

Where children have illnesses such as:

- chickenpox
- impetigo
- measles
- rubella
- scabies

they must not attend the service as there is a risk of spreading the infection to others. A child should not come back to Barnardos until their doctor says they are better.

Where children are taking medicine (for example, antibiotics or inhalers), but are able to attend services, we must have a signed note from your doctor or health nurse to say your child is well enough to mix with other children.

To give your child medicine, we must have a signed note from you giving your permission and instructions on when to give the medicine and how much to give.

Parents will be required to give written permission for their child to receive medical care in case of accident or emergency.

We are committed to keeping our building safe. Please let any of the staff know if there is anything in the building which needs to be fixed.

There is no smoking allowed in our centres in line with legislation and good health practices.

We do not allow any drugs, alcohol or violence in our centres. Any illegal activity taking place in our centres which threatens a child, parent/carer or staff member or is witnessed by a staff member will be reported to the Gardai.

In the event of an accident a report form is filled out and explained to the parent/carer, who will then be asked to sign it.

This is what we call our Health and Safety Policy.



How to make comments and complaints

We would like to know what you think of our services.

If you:

- Like the service
- Want to change anything
- Have any suggestions
- Have any complaints

You can:

- Talk to a member of staff/manager
- Fill out a comments card, which are in all Barnardos centres
- Make a formal complaint, by filling out a complaints form

All comments/complaints will be taken into account and considered by Barnardos staff to make sure our services are the best they can be.

This is what we call our Comments and Complaints Policy.

Thank You

Thanks to the artists whose work brightens the pages of this guide:

First name	Age
Kyle	3
Billy	3
Oisin	1
Niall	2
Cameron	2
Kelley	2



