SUNYATA
BUDDHIST CENTRE

Sunyata Retreat Centre Limited

Snaty, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare, V95 EP80

Email: info@sunyatacentre.org | Website: www.sunyatacentre.org

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Version 2026/1

Approved by the Board of Trustees	05 November 2026
Effective from	10 November 2026
Next review due	October 2028

Safeguarding Contacts

Child Safeguarding Email: **childsafeguarding@sunyatacentre.org**

Role	Name	Phone
Relevant Person	Sarah-Jane Burton	083 88 88 656
Designated Liaison Person (DLP)	Bryan Nestor	089 23 40 114
Deputy DLP	Anna Majchrzak	086 46 77 529

1. Name of Service and Activities Provided

Sunyata Retreat Centre, Snaty, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare.

Sunyata Buddhist Centre is a Buddhist residential retreat and meditation centre in the Thai Forest tradition. Children may attend the Centre with their parents or guardians in connection with Family Camp, residential stays, meditation and community activities, and other family-related events.

Sunyata does not operate as a childcare service. Parents and guardians remain responsible for the care, supervision and welfare of their children while at the Centre.

During designated Family Camp activities, appropriately selected and Garda-vetted volunteers may assist parents with the supervision of children. This assistance does not transfer overall parental responsibility to Sunyata or to the volunteer.

Children may come into contact with Board members, employees, volunteers, teachers, visiting monastics, retreatants and visitors while attending the Centre.

2. Our Commitment to Safeguard Children

Sunyata Buddhist Centre is committed to safeguarding the welfare, dignity and safety of every child who attends the Centre and to providing an environment in which children are treated with respect and protected from harm.

We are committed to upholding the rights of children to be safe, listened to and taken seriously. Safeguarding is a responsibility shared by everyone involved in the Centre.

Parents and guardians retain primary responsibility for their children while at Sunyata. No religious, spiritual, cultural, personal or organisational consideration takes precedence over the safety and welfare of a child.

Sunyata has appointed a Relevant Person, a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a Deputy DLP. The Relevant Person is the first point of contact in relation to this Child Safeguarding Statement. The DLP and Deputy DLP receive and manage child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with Sunyata's Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

This Statement has been developed having regard to the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, and current Tusla guidance.

3. Risk Assessment

Sunyata has carried out an assessment of the potential for harm to a child while availing of its services and activities. The principal risks identified and the procedures in place to manage those risks are summarised below.

Risk of harm identified	**Policies / procedures in place to manage risk**
Harm by a trustee, employee, volunteer, teacher, visiting monastic or other person acting for Sunyata	Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures; Code of Conduct; reporting and allegation procedures; safe recruitment and Garda vetting where applicable.

Harm by another retreatant, visitor, parent/guardian or other adult at the Centre	Parental supervision; Code of Conduct; safeguarding reporting procedures; DLP/Deputy DLP arrangements.
Harmful behaviour, bullying or abuse between children	Parental supervision; Family Camp arrangements; Code of Conduct; safeguarding reporting procedures.
A child being inadequately supervised	Parents/guardians remain responsible throughout; clear Family Camp supervision arrangements; authorised volunteers assist only within agreed arrangements.
Harm during Family Camp activities	Parents retain overall responsibility; volunteers authorised to assist with supervision are appropriately selected, Garda vetted and given safeguarding information.
Inappropriate one-to-one contact with a child	Sunyata does not arrange one-to-one meetings or activities between children and teachers, visiting monastics, retreat leaders or other adults acting for the Centre; interactions should remain open and observable.
Harm associated with residential accommodation	Children stay as part of their family arrangement; one family per bedroom; no children's dormitories; children are not accommodated alone with unrelated adults.
Harm during outings, walks or activities away from the Centre	Parental knowledge and consent; appropriate supervision; responsible adults know which children are participating; suitable outing arrangements.
Harm associated with transporting children	Parental knowledge and consent; parent/guardian or specifically appointed appropriate supervisor accompanies the child or children; safe transport requirements apply.

Inappropriate physical contact or intimate care	Clear physical-contact boundaries; parents/guardians retain responsibility for intimate care; volunteers do not undertake routine intimate care.
Inappropriate or unauthorised photography or video	Parental/guardian consent; dignity and privacy requirements; separate controls for publication and public identification.

Harm through private digital communication or social media	No unnecessary private adult-child digital relationships; communication concerning a child normally takes place through the parent/guardian.
Failure to recognise, respond to or report a safeguarding concern	DLP and Deputy DLP; Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures; safeguarding information/training; clear Tusla reporting procedure.
An unsuitable person supervising or assisting with children	Safe recruitment and selection; Garda vetting required for volunteers authorised to supervise or assist in supervising children during Family Camp.
Failure to respond appropriately to an allegation concerning someone associated with Sunyata	Separate child safeguarding and organisational processes; DLP reporting procedure; proportionate interim protective measures; fair procedures and conflict-of-interest arrangements.
Inappropriate use of religious or spiritual authority in relation to a child	Code of Conduct; safeguarding boundaries; teachers and visiting monastics do not meet children individually as part of Sunyata activities.

4. Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Sunyata's Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures provides the detailed procedures supporting this Statement. In addition to the safeguards identified in the risk assessment, Sunyata maintains procedures and arrangements covering:

· management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against trustees, employees,

volunteers, teachers, visiting monastics and other persons associated with Sunyata; · safe recruitment and selection of persons undertaking relevant roles, including Garda vetting where required by law or Sunyata's safeguarding arrangements; · provision of safeguarding information and training appropriate to each role; · reporting child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla;
· maintaining a list of mandated persons, if any, within the relevant service; · appointment and functions of the Relevant Person;
· appointment and functions of the DLP and Deputy DLP;
· Family Camp supervision and parental responsibility;
· one-to-one contact and appropriate physical boundaries;
· residential arrangements;

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· outings and transport involving children;
· photography, video and digital communication;
· confidential safeguarding records and secure storage;
· handling informal concerns and complaints where child safeguarding issues arise.

5. Mandated Persons

Sunyata maintains an internal list of persons, if any, who are mandated persons within the relevant service for the purposes of the Children First Act 2015.

A person is not treated as a Sunyata mandated person merely because they hold a profession listed in Schedule 2 of the Act outside their role at the Centre. Where a person has an individual statutory reporting obligation arising in the course of their relevant employment or profession, that obligation remains with that person.

The mandated persons position is reviewed when relevant personnel or roles change.

6. Reporting a Child Safeguarding Concern

Concerns about the protection or welfare of a child should normally be brought promptly to the DLP or, if the DLP is unavailable, the Deputy DLP.

Anyone may report a concern directly to Tusla. No Sunyata procedure prevents a person from contacting Tusla or An Garda Síochána directly.

Where there is an immediate concern for a child's safety, administrative procedures must not delay protective action. Where appropriate, Tusla should be contacted urgently and An Garda Síochána should be contacted where a child appears to be in immediate danger.

Sunyata's child safeguarding email is an internal contact route and is not a substitute for making a required report to Tusla.

7. Implementation and Review

Sunyata recognises that safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility. The Board of Trustees is committed to implementing this Statement and the accompanying Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

This Statement will be reviewed at intervals not exceeding 24 months and sooner where there has been a material change in any matter to which it refers.

The Statement will be displayed at the Centre and made readily available to parents, guardians, volunteers and others involved with the service. It may also be published on Sunyata's website. A copy will be made available to Tusla if requested.

The Board will ensure that the safeguarding risk assessment remains appropriate to the activities actually provided by Sunyata and that the Relevant Person, DLP and Deputy DLP details are kept current.

8. Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name	Phone	Email
Relevant Person	Sarah-Jane Burton	083 88 88 656	sarahjane.burton@sunyatacentre.org
Designated Liaison Person (DLP)	Bryan Nestor	089 23 40 114	childsafeguarding@sunyatacentre.org
Deputy DLP	Anna Majchrzak	086 46 77 529	childsafeguarding@sunyatacentre.org

Service Provider:

Sunyata Buddhist Centre
Snaty
Sixmilebridge
Co. Clare, Ireland
info@sunyatacentre.org

Centre phone: 085 13 53 695

Approval

Chair of the Board: Sarah-Jane Burton

Signature: Sarah-Jane Burton

Date: 09 November 2026

Next review: October 2028