

Children's Advisory Team

Team Members' Information Leaflet

This Information Leaflet is for children and young people (10-17 years) who are interested in joining our team, and their parents or guardians

1. About the Museum of Childhood Ireland (MoCI)

Children have been at the heart of life in Ireland since prehistoric times and throughout our history. But because no-one really listened to children before the 21st Century, their stories are usually ignored in Irish history. That's why the Museum of Childhood has been launched: to show respect for children and childhood, past and present, and to place them where they should be – at the centre of life in Ireland. See our website:

<https://museumofchildhood.ie/>

We've been operating as a virtual museum – and sometimes a pop-up museum – since 2016. But now at last we have our own building. Renovations are underway, and soon the Museum will be opening as a physical destination and historical resource centre for children and adults alike.

This will be a museum *for* children, *about* children, *with* children (including the child we all once were), so we need to get children fully involved in planning and running the museum, starting now.

A NOTE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Your child should read this leaflet before they sign the consent form and make a commitment to join our Children's Advisory Team. It may seem a bit long, but it is important that children and young people understand all this information before they decide. Some may prefer to read it on their own, but ideally you should read and discuss it together, to make sure your child understands everything and is keen to get involved.

Also, your child cannot join our team without *your* informed consent as their parent or legal guardian. Therefore, it is also important for you to read this leaflet carefully and sign the parent's part of the consent form. If you want more information about the project, there are links and contact details at the end of this leaflet.

Many thanks, MoCI Children's Advisory Team facilitation group.

2. The MoCI Children's Advisory Team: What is it for?

We are setting up the **Children's Advisory Team** to make sure that the views, ideas and interests of children and young people have top priority in the development, programming and organisation of our museum.

The **Children's Advisory Team** will:

- Uphold children's right to express views on all matters that affect them, and make sure decision-makers to take these views into account in policy and practice (*UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12*).
- Make sure children's views, ideas and interests are heard and acted on in every area of the museum's development, which includes policy, programming, management, organisation and more.
- By listening to children, and taking their views on board in this way, we will ensure a more targeted, effective, relevant and impactful museum service for all the children of Ireland.

3. Who can join the MoCI Children's Advisory Team?

We are looking for children and young people aged 10-17 (up to your 18th birthday) who are interested in being part of our team, who feel enthusiastic about getting involved, and who are able to commit to monthly on-line meetings (normally after school, or week-ends).

Apart from that:

- **You can be anywhere on the island of Ireland.** We hope that all parts of Ireland will be represented in our Children's Advisory Team (in future, when we organise face-to-face meetings, the museum will aim to cover travel and other expenses).
- **The team will work in English,** so you need to speak and understand English fairly well. (If you want to join our team, but are not confident in English, contact us anyway and let's discuss how we can help. We don't want anyone to be excluded).
- **Parental consent:** All members will have to give informed consent, and also have the informed consent of a parent or guardian. This will normally be done by both you and your parent signing a consent form which we will send you (see section 12 below).
- **Internet connection:** As most of our activities will be on-line, you'll need to have access to the internet and a suitable device to connect (computer, tablet or smartphone). However, we don't want to see anyone excluded if they don't have their own device, so if this could be a problem for you, contact us anyway, and we will help to arrange the internet access you need.
- **Diversity:** To encourage diversity and challenge discrimination, we will do everything we can to tackle barriers that may get in the way of an interested child or young person being able to join the team.

4. What will it involve if you decide to join?

- The Children's Advisory Team will meet once a month, on-line via Zoom. Meetings will last no more than one hour.
- The team members will decide themselves which day of the week and what time of day works best for them. Our first meetings will be on week-day evenings (after school) and/or Sunday afternoons. The team will then decide for themselves and agree a pattern of regular meetings.
- The facilitation team is made up of experienced professionals trained in children and young people's participation, supported by young adults with previous experience as participants in children's voice activities with the museum. There will never be less than two responsible adult facilitators present. All members of the facilitation team will be fully Garda-vetted.
- All aspects of the museum will be up for discussion, including (but not limited to):
 - Policy
 - Programming/content
 - Management and organisation
 - Publicity and promotion
 - Media outreach
 - Facilities
 - Staffing
 - Future planning
 - Topics or projects that the children and young people themselves put forward for discussion.
- As well as our on-line meetings, we plan to have face-to-face meetings about twice a year, initially at the Office of the Children's Ombudsman in Dublin, then moving to the museum site in Waterford when it is ready. As far as possible the Museum will cover travel, refreshments and out-of-pocket expenses of participation (though what is possible will depend on Museum's resources and will be kept under review as things develop).

5. Can you change your mind and leave the team?

Yes, you can. There will be no penalty and you do not even have to give a reason if you do not want to.

However, we are really hoping that people will find it worthwhile and enjoyable, and choose to stay involved.

6. How will your ideas be used?

The ideas and suggestions put forward by the Children's Advisory Team will go to the museum's managers who will consider the team's inputs and use them at every stage of planning and running the museum. This can work two ways:

- Sometimes the managers may have specific questions where they want to know what the young people think, and will listen to their answers.

- Sometimes the young people may have their own ideas or concerns they want to put to management and have the managers respond to them.

7. How will you find out about the outcome of the team's work (how are your ideas put into practice, and what happens)?

Every time the team provides ideas and suggestions to the managers, we will make sure you get a reply from them, saying (in child-friendly language) how they plan to use the information, or maybe suggesting further discussion. Also, as the museum grows and develops, we will make sure the Children's Advisory Team gets regular child-friendly progress reports, so you can see how your ideas have been put into practice.

8. How will your privacy be protected?

When we write up the team's work to report to management – and for public information such as the Museum website – we will never mention team members by name or give any information that can be used to identify who they are.

Any information we have about you, like your name and contact details, will be kept confidential and not shared with anybody.

An exception to this would be if you want to be known as a member of the Children's Advisory Team – for example having your photograph on the web-site so people will recognise what you have achieved. Before this happens, both you and your parent or guardian will have to give consent in writing. You will always have the option to remain anonymous if you prefer.

(Another exception would be if we were worried about a child protection issue, where we would be legally required to pass the details to Tusla).

9. What are the benefits of joining the MoCI Children's Advisory Team?

Being a member of the MoCI Children's Advisory Team is not a paid job. It is a voluntary commitment. (Please note that the adult facilitators are not getting paid either, so this is a fair arrangement).

However, there could be all kinds of benefits for you if you decide to join:

- You will learn a lot about childhood in Ireland past and present, and also about how to run a museum.
- You will have a good experience of working with others on an important project, and learn new skills for working with others, including teamwork, communication and online collaboration.
- You will meet new people and might make new friends – it could be fun.
- You will know that you have made a real contribution to creating a museum of the future for all the children and families of Ireland.
- This would be an achievement you (and your family) could feel proud of.
- All this could boost your confidence for new projects in the future.

- We will give you a Certificate of Achievement, outlining what you have done. This could be useful for your CV when you leave school.
- When the physical museum opens to the public, you will get free access, and a discount for your family.

There should be no cost in participating in on-line sessions. When we hold face-to-face sessions, the museum will cover refreshments and travel costs. We will also do all we can to provide any additional support needed, so everyone participates equally.

10. What are the risks of joining the Children's Advisory Team?

It is hard to think of any serious risks in joining the team. Possible risks could be somebody finding out about your involvement and trying to harm you, or you being upset by something that is discussed, or a falling-out with another participant leading to unpleasantness, but we think these are extremely unlikely. In any case, the adults running the sessions will be experienced and sensitive, and will know how to support anyone who is having difficulties.

MoCI has a child safeguarding statement,¹ which will be fully adhered to in the work of the Children's Advisory Team.

11. Contact details for further information

You can find out more about the Museum of Childhood Ireland on our website: www.museumofchildhood.ie

If you have any questions or concerns about joining the MoCI Children's Advisory Team, please contact the team coordinator Harry Shier via email: hshier@museumofchildhood.ie

If you would like to talk on the phone, ask your parent or guardian to contact us first by email to arrange this.

12. How to join the team

1. If you have read through this leaflet and are sure you want to join our team, ask a parent or guardian to email Harry Shier (hshier@museumofchildhood.ie), giving your name and age, and request a Children's Advisory Team sign-up consent form.
2. We will email you the form. There is one part for the child/young person to complete and sign (parent can help if needed), and one part for the parent or guardian to complete and sign.
3. Take a photo of (or scan) the signed forms and return them by email.
4. Once we have your signed forms, we will send more information to welcome you to the team, and invite you to the first on-line meeting.

HS September 2023

¹ <https://museumofchildhood.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Child-Safeguarding-Statement.docx.pdf>