

RTÉ Junior's Children's Charter	

1. Introduction & context

Radio is an attractive, relevant, user-friendly medium for children - the potential which it has to encourage interaction, imagination and education tool is well documented. RTÉ Junior will seek to harness all these attributes and at the same time must be mindful that children are a vulnerable audience, and that parents/guardians have many concerns regarding the role media plays in children's lives.

This document has therefore been drafted as a Children's Charter - a statement of intent regarding how RTÉ Junior will engage with children on various levels. It is a work in progress that needs to evolve as the station evolves and engages with its listeners and stakeholders. It will therefore be updated from time to time and the latest version will be available on-line and on request at all times.

The purpose of this Children's Charter, is to codify RTÉ Junior's attitude towards children, and clarify what the organisation deems to be acceptable behaviour towards this audience. Any and all parties dealing with RTÉ Junior should therefore be aware of this Charter.

This document was drafted in conjunction with expert opinion and advice with regard to the modern day sensitivities surrounding children and families as an audience and such input will be sought at various times in the station's future.

2. Scope

2.1 General

- The primary purpose of RTÉ Junior is to broadcast in an entertaining and where appropriate, educational way, to children aged two to twelve years and their parents/guardians from 7 am to 9 pm daily.
- RTÉ Junior's commitment to listeners is that our content will be fun. We will be entertaining as well as responsible being mindful of our role as a national broadcaster and pioneers of Irish children's radio. In many ways we are setting the benchmark/bar for future children and family based radio services
- RTÉ Junior will of course reflect RTÉ's positive values & social behaviour for the good of children and families in recognition of our corporate citizenship and the social responsibility we have to this audience.

2.2 Definitions

- For the purposes of this code, a child is defined as under 15 .
- RTÉ Junior specifically deals with the 2 to 12 year old audience
- All RTÉ Junior programmes therefore can be defined as ‘children’s programmes’ in terms of the BCI code
- Digital Audio Broadcasting is a new way of broadcasting radio via a network of terrestrial transmitters. It provides listeners with more choice, better sound quality and more information.
- Internet Streaming refers to the distribution of content via the Internet. RTE Junior will be streamed live.

2.3 Relevant codes

RTÉ Junior will adhere to RTÉ’s Programme Standards and Guidelines, recognising the special needs of children and that they are young citizens with a strong influencing power over broadcasting.

RTÉ Junior will also adhere to all relevant codes such as the BCI’s Children’s Advertising Code and the ASAI Codes of Standards for Advertising, Promotion and Direct Marketing – specifically the sectoral section regarding children.

3. Marketing (to include advertising, sponsorship, promotion, PR, events and on-line)

RTÉ Junior recognises that children have different levels of cognitive abilities depending on their age.

All RTÉ Junior marketing will be aimed at parents/guardians, and on occasion it may *also* be aimed at children, but never solely at children

- RTÉ Junior will not be marketed in an environment where parents/carers are not also present
- Aside from RTE’s own web site, RTE Junior will not knowingly advertise or market the station via other web sites that do not strictly adhere to the relevant Irish codes.
- RTÉ Junior will never knowingly link to sites for the purposes of marketing that do not uphold these standards
- All RTÉ Junior partners/suppliers/advertisers must adhere to all relevant Irish codes . Partners/suppliers will be provided with a copy of this code to ensure an appreciation of our position regarding the communication and marketing to children and families.
- RTÉ Junior will not accept advertising but elements of the schedule as it develops may be open to suitable sponsorship.

4. Charter compliance

- The Station Editor will be the guardian of the code and will ensure it is updated and amended as necessary, and communicated to all relevant internal and external parties/stakeholders
- To ensure awareness and understanding of, and adherence to this code, this will be circulated to all RTÉ Junior employees – programme makers, producers, presenters, contributors, researchers etc.
- Stakeholders – parents, children and experts in the area of children, families and marketing - will be invited to review this Charter and to ‘spot check’ RTÉ Junior’s communication and marketing activity

5. Content

5.1 Appropriate content

- RTÉ Junior is primarily a Music station broadcasting from 7 am to 9 pm daily on DAB and streamed on the internet. The music content and policy of the station is to broadcast appropriate music content bearing in mind the need to play current popular hits for the older target audience. Schedules will have clearly defined areas for the pre school and school-going child, and music scheduling from 8 – 9 am and 8pm - 9pm will be geared towards the 10 - 12 age group.
- Sexualisation: RTÉ Junior will not describe or portray a child in a sexually provocative manner or provoke anxiety in children as listeners with regard to their bodily appearance.
- Music which is deemed to have offensive or inappropriate lyrics, will not be broadcast on RTE Junior.
The description (Lyrics / Spoken Content) of any dangerous behaviour easily imitated by children should be avoided.
The inappropriate description or portrayal in any RTÉ Junior content of anti - social behaviour by children, eg. malicious or bullying behaviour towards other children or serious disregard for parental authority, is to be treated with great care and sensitivity

5.2 Irish Content

- RTÉ Junior's schedule will include Irish and home grown music and musical talent. This will be achieved throughout the daytime weekday schedule as well as a dedicated weekend programme with both Irish and World music for children drawing on such sources as National Youth Orchestra, Cor na nOg etc.

5.3 Multicultural/ Diversity Content

- Voices on the station RTÉ Junior will reflect the current Irish multicultural experience as lived by 2 to 12 year olds.

5.4 Watershed

- By the nature of its schedule and audience, RTÉ Junior must be aware of its responsibilities to its listeners at all times. As a service focussing only on children, all content must fall under this area.

5.5 Spoken content

- A clear warning must be transmitted before any programme or report that may be found disturbing to young listeners. Discussions on topics which could affect listeners or have an impact on the child who is being interviewed should be treated with great care. Children should not be questioned to elicit views of private family matters or matters likely to be beyond their judgement or matters more appropriate to adult discussion.

6. Audience

6.1 Parents

- RTÉ Junior understands it is the parents/ guardians who are custodians of children's media choices. RTÉ Junior will therefore work with parents/guardians to assist them to make informed and relevant media choices for, and with, their children.
- RTÉ Junior believes in responsible and appropriate media consumption and will endeavour to ensure this message is communicated to our audience

6.2 Schools

- RTÉ Junior will only participate in schools with permission of the school.

6.3 Children – as listeners

- RTÉ Junior's primary audience is two to twelve year olds in the home, pre school or school, with parents/carers.
- RTÉ Junior will not invite children to interact with the station via email, phone texts or other electronic means without parental consent..
- Care and caution will be taken whenever listeners to RTÉ Junior are asked about themselves or their family.
- RTÉ Junior's website will never encourage children to either divulge personal details or download material.
- All RTÉ Junior competitions will be clearly presented with a summary of the basic rules. Any statement about the chance of winning must be clear, fair and

accurate. No advantage must be taken of the natural credulity and sense of loyalty of children.

6.4 Competition entries

- For some, but not all competitions, name and address details will be required to receive the prize. These details will only be accessed or used by RTÉ Junior for the administration of the competition, and will not be passed to any other organisation. Requirements in regard to personal information as defined in the Data Protection Acts will be rigidly adhered to.
- Unless otherwise stated RTÉ Junior competitions are only open to the 32 counties of Ireland and RTÉ Junior reserves the right to request proof of age.
- Entrants must obtain permission from their parent or guardian before entering the competition.
- Where some form of submission is required for competition entry, it must be entirely the entrant's own work, and by submitting the work the entrant grants RTÉ Junior the right to publish and use the material in all media for all purposes in connection with the competition.
- In the event when a winner cannot be contacted - no reply from the phone number or address supplied – RTÉ Junior reserves the right to offer the prize(s) to a runner up or withhold it for use in another competition.
- Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. There will be no cash alternatives.
- Entries submitted cannot be returned and RTÉ Junior does not accept any responsibility for late or lost entries. Proof of sending is not proof of receipt.
- All RTÉ Junior competitions are not open to employees or contractors of RTÉ Junior or any person directly or indirectly involved in the organisation or running of the competition, or their immediate family.
- RTÉ Junior's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- RTÉ Junior reserves the right to cancel the competition at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, and if circumstances arise outside of its control.
- Entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules and to agree to be bound by them when entering this competition. Entrants may be asked to take part in post competition publicity.
- This agreement is governed by the laws of Ireland.

7. Children – as participants

- Children's voices will make up the most part of the presentation style of RTÉ Junior.
 - Programme makers have a duty of care towards children involved in any production and the health safety and welfare of the child must be the most important consideration when a child is in the care of RTÉ Junior. The child must not be asked to participate in any item that could in any way potentially damage the child physically or mentally or emotionally
 - Permission and Judgement :Children, just like some adults, are often eager to be interviewed but may lack judgement about their immediate or long term interests. They can be easily led in questioning and are often open to suggestion. Interviewers for RTÉ Junior should be careful about prompting children and should allow them to speak for themselves.
 - The participation of the child who is featured or identified on RTÉ Junior can only proceed with the prior consent of a parent or guardian. The younger, or more vulnerable the child and the more sensitive the subject matter, the more likely it is that consent will be essential. Where one is required an RTÉ Junior Consent Form will be supplied.
 - School permission. If any participation in RTÉ Junior conflicts with the child's school attendance then the consent from the school/parent must be obtained.
- NERA licences.
- The Protection of young Persons (Employment) Act 1996 introduced a Licence system for the use of children in any employment. RTÉ Junior will apply and observe these conditions relevant to any recording of programmes for its schedules.
 - Chaperone. Child participants in any programme for RTÉ Junior whether as performers or audience members must be chaperoned if a parent or guardian is not available to accompany the child. A Chaperone will be a suitable and competent person by virtue of their experience of such work and RTÉ 's knowledge of their abilities and character. The chaperone will supervise the welfare and discipline of the child either on the RTÉ complex or on location. The chaperone will be an additional member of the normal production team.
 - Food and Travel. The chaperone will provide the children with food and drink. Children should be fed nutritious and balanced meals. The chaperone must ensure that safe travel arrangements are in place for the child. The child must always be accompanied from home to RTÉ or the location and back home, either by a parent or guardian or by the chaperone. At no time should a child be left waiting or unattended. This procedure must be observed at all times. Sending one or a number of children by taxi unaccompanied, is not permitted

- Vouchers. The offering of a financial inducement to participate in a programme is forbidden. A child's contribution should be recognised by way of some suitable gift or gifts. If a producer or reporter feels in exceptional circumstances that a fee is warranted they should seek clearance from the appropriate Station Editor. The fee should be paid to the parents or guardian of the child or to the establishment which coaches and provides the services of the child for the programme.
- Privacy. Staff and Freelance contributors to RTÉ Junior must at all times be sensitive to a child's sensibilities. A child's privacy must be respected at all times in dressing rooms, bathrooms etc. Staff must avoid any inappropriate behaviour. As far as practical any staff member or freelance contributor to RTÉ Junior should try to avoid being alone with a child. Looking after children in groups is the preferred option. RTÉ Junior's behaviour towards children must measure up to the standards of childcare professionals.
- Content and Context of participation should be clearly explained. A child's own consent should always be sought about being interviewed. The content and context should be explained clearly to a child in language and terms they can understand. A child's ability to give consent depends on the stage of development and degree of understanding the child displays as well as a child's age. Programme-makers may wish to consult an appropriate professional or an adult who knows the child, to help them make such judgements.
- Accident or Injury . In the event of an accident or injury to a child contributing to RTÉ Junior or attending a recording, RTÉ policies and procedures for dealing with and reporting accidents should be followed. All such events should be reported in writing to the appropriate Station Editor setting out clearly the facts with particular reference to the supervision being exercised at the relevant time.