

# ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES



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Ardfinnan Community Playschool is operated by Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Ltd. by Guarantee (ACCCL)

Company Registration Number: 422929    CHY No.: 16937    Registered Irish Charity No.: 20062132

Our mission is "To provide high quality, affordable and accessible early education to children aged from 2 years 6 months in our local community

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

### **Policy Statement**

The purpose of **ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL** is to provide high quality, affordable and accessible early education to children aged from 2 years 6 months in our local community. It is a community run service and is classified as a sessional service under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### **Setting Details**

Name of setting	Ardfinnan Community Playschool
Address	Lady's Abbey, Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Eircode	E91 RP21
Person in Charge	Erica Condon
Deputy Person in Charge	Elaine Cowan
Contact phone Numbers	052 7464488 086 1762095
Email Address	ardfinnanchilcare@gmail.com ardfinnanplayschool@gmail.com
Registered Providers	Elaine Bowe

### **Description of Setting**

Type of setting	Sessional
Who service is aimed at	Children from ages of 2 years and 6 months
Community or private	Community run service
Curriculum followed	Play based curriculum following Aistear guidelines
Siolta Accredited	Accredited by Siolta in 2017 & 2022
Number of weeks open	38 weeks per school calendar year
Opening hours	Morning Session 9.00 to 12.00 Afternoon Session 1.00 to 4.00 daily
Number of children catered for	22 children per session
Number of staff	4
Childcare Schemes and Fees	ECCE, and NCS Fees are €14 per session

### **Mission Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool aims to provide a quality open welcoming child centred service, where children will grow and learn, in a safe environment.

Begin to explore, discover and adjust socially through play situations, under the guidance of suitably qualified adults and interested parents and guardians. In a service where health, safety, welfare needs and rights of all children in our care is one of the utmost importance.

### **Policies**

ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL quality of practice is underpinned by a set of policies, procedures and practice guidelines which reflect our ethos of providing an open welcoming child centred service, where children will grow and learn in a safe environment. We are fully compliant with GDPR guidelines. All policies are available to view in the office.

This policy was adopted by ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL on Date: August, 2019 & updated in January 2023

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Erica Condon, Lead Educator**

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All policies and procedures correct at time of print in line with government legislation.

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendments) Regulations 2016,

Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act amended the Child Care Act, 1991

Policies and procedures follow guidelines set by Túsła, Early Childhood Ireland, CCC (County Childcare Committees) and Barnardos

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**GOVERNANCE**

# ADMISSIONS & ENROLMENT

**Policy Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool welcomes all families and children into our service inclusive of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, membership of the Travelling community and religious belief. Families are welcome at all times especially during the settling in period

**This policy is underpinned by the Childcare preschool Services Regulations 2006**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool adheres to the:

- Promotion of equal opportunities
- Open and fair admission procedures
- Anti-Discriminatory procedures
- Respecting cultural and language differences

All policies and procedures are available to parents/ guardians. Parents/ guardians must agree to adhere to all policies and procedures when accepting a place

**Enrolment Procedures**

Upon making contact with our Administrator a Pre-Enrolment form will be issued, when this is returned to our Administrator it will be stamped and dated.

- The child's name is placed on the waiting list when the Pre-Enrolment Form is returned completed to our office administrator
- When places become available places will be offered on a 'first come first served bases'
- Parents/guardians will have opportunities to visit the setting prior to admission
- Referrals will be considered as places become available

**Enrolment**

- Each child enrolled in Ardfinnan Community Playschool must adhere to our Vaccination Policy, which states all children attending the service must be fully vaccinated. Please refer to our vaccination policy for more details.
- Each child enrolled in Ardfinnan Community Playschool must be **fully toilet trained** prior to beginning their preschool experience.
- Each child and their parents will be invited to our opening evening prior to the start of each new school year, this evening is a chance for us to get to know the child, meet parents and introduce our staff. Each parent will be issued with our enrolment pack which includes full detailed enrolment form and information booklet along with any other relevant information necessary for each child.
- Full enrolment forms must be returned completed on or before the first day of playschool
- A copy of the child's vaccination record must accompany the enrolment form
- Children must be **2 years and 6 months** of age before enrolling in our service
- All Pre-Enrolment and Enrolment forms are stored securely in a locked filing cabinet

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**GOVERNANCE****FEES****Policy Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool fees reflect both the need to offer high standards of practice and affordability to parents. We are committed to working together with parents to ensure quality care and learning for their child

**Principle:**

This policy is underpinned by the National Standards for Preschool Services 2010, the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012.

The committee are responsible for establishing fees policies and structures which must be approved by the Board of Management at Ardfinnan Community Playschool and the Tipperary County Childcare on an annual basis.

All money generated from fundraising for the service must be lodged into the bank account of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee.

Fees are to be paid in the reception office at Ardfinnan Community Playschool. Management will ensure regular lodgements or contact the Treasurer if time constraints prevent lodgements.

**FEES PAYMENTS**

The rate is €14 per session.

Fees should be paid weekly on Monday or the first date of attendance each week.

Receipts are issued on request only.

There will be no reduction in fees if a child is absent due to illness, or any such reason.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS**

**Weekly in advance:** fees should be paid on Monday or the first date of attendance each week.

**Monthly in advance:** There is an option to pay fees on a monthly bases, please speak to Administrator for details

**Quarterly in advance:** There is an option to pay fees on a term-by-term bases, please speak to Administrator for details

**LATE PAYMENT**

If one month's fees are outstanding at the end of the 2nd month a written reminder will be issued.

If fees are still outstanding and no contact has been made after the 3rd month the service is withdrawn.

**GOVERNANCE****CHILD ARRIVAL / COLLECTION POLICY**

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**Policy Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool promotes arrival and departure time as an opportunity to actively engage with children and families to help with the children's transitions. We understand that arrival and collection are our busiest times throughout the day and are committed to following strict guidelines to ensure all children's safety is protected. This policy outlines the protocols in relation to arrival and collection of children from Ardfinnan Community Playschool.

**Principle**

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

**Purpose of this Policy is to....**

- To ensure the welfare and safety of the children in the service.
- To ensure that children are received into the service safely and securely, and that parents/guardians/carers make direct contact with the appropriate staff members on arrival each day with their child.
- Parents/guardians/carers are encouraged to stay until their child is safely in the playroom before leaving the building
- To encourage all parents/guardians or carers to come for their children on time.
- To ensure children are returned safely into the care of their parents/guardians or carers.
- In cases where a parent/guardian/carer does not arrive on time for their child at the end of their session, to ensure that the child is cared for safely by at least one competent staff member who is known to the child.
- To support staff members in handling challenging or exceptional circumstances related to the children leaving the setting daily.

**Legislation and regulatory requirements**

Regulation 10 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 requires that a policy relating to 'Authorisation to Collect Children' is written and implemented.

Regulation 24 requires that children are checked into and out of the service on a daily basis and that a written record of this is kept.

**Children need...**

- To feel safe and secure when they arrive at Ardfinnan Community Playschool and when they leave our service.
- We ask that the adult who takes them to the service to make direct contact with a member of our staff and share any information that might help their child feel comfortable and engage well during their time in playschool.
- To know who will come for them at the end of each session and that they will not be allowed to leave with anyone they don't know or anyone who is not old enough to take responsibility for them.
- Their parents/guardians and playschool staff communicate positively with each other and make decisions in their child's best interests.

**Parents/guardians need...**

- To know the procedure for safely and securely leaving their child in the care of qualified Early Years Educator each day.

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- To be confident that no person, other than a parent or guardian, who has not been nominated by them (in person and in writing), will be allowed to take their child from the service.
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool will provide very clear information to them, regarding who is entitled to make decisions about who can take their child from the setting.
- Provide clear information on what the procedures are for any changes to arrangements and/or authorisations agreed on their child's enrolment form.

#### **All staff members need...**

- To be very clear on the service's policy and to have very clear written guidance on how children should be received into the setting.
- Absolute clarity on who children can leave the setting with, in order to ensure that children's safety and welfare is prioritised at all times. This requires specific information about who a child's guardians are and any person who has been nominated by a child's parent/guardian as a person who is allowed to take the child out of the care of the service.
- Clear procedures on how people authorised/nominated by parents/guardians are to be identified where they are unfamiliar.

#### **Management needs...**

- To ensure that the requirement to have a policy on Child Arrival and Collection is met.
- To ensure that children's safety and welfare are prioritised at all times.
- This policy to ensure that everyone in Ardfinnan Community Playschool is absolutely clear on what the service requires and what the procedures are for children's safe and secure reception into the setting as well as their safe return to their parents'/guardians' care at the end of each session.
- To ensure that this policy is made clear to parents/guardians.
- To ensure that decisions can only be made by the child's parents or legal guardians.
- To ensure that all staff members know how to identify which persons can or cannot take a child from the service
- To ensure that persons other than parents/guardians have been nominated by the child's parents/guardians
- To ensure that children are protected where there is any dispute and/or any concern for their welfare.

#### **Procedure:**

On enrolment, a written hard copy of each child's details is obtained and kept with the following details:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date the child first attended the service.
- The name, address and telephone number of the person/s authorised by a parent or authorised nominee named in the child's record to collect the child from the premises.
- The relationship to the child of the persons authorised to collect the child from the premises.
- Only persons over 18 years of age are eligible to collect children
- Details of any court ordered custody arrangements, or relevant legal evidence of individuals that are prohibited from collecting a child.
- The signature of the person providing authorisation.

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- Details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.
- Record of immunisations.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- Written parent or authorised nominee consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool shall ensure that a record in writing is retained for a period of 2 years for Túsla from the date on which the child ceases attending the service.

#### **Child's Arrivals:**

- On arrival at Ardfinnan Community Playschool parents/guardians/carers must ensure that they make direct contact with a member of staff and pass on any information that is relevant to the child's care for the session.
- Children MUST be signed in upon their arrival with the time of arrival recorded.
- Parents/guardians/carers must ensure their child has entered the playroom before leaving the building
- Both Staff and parents/ guardians should make every effort to support the child's transition each day through daily conversations and moral support.

#### **Child's Departure Procedure:**

- If a child is to be collected by a person other than their parent prior signed parental permission must be in place, see enrolment form
- The parent should provide the name, address, contact number of the persons authorised to collect their children and state the relationship of this person to the child
- All authorised persons must be over 18 years of age.
- Children can only be collected by an authorised person.
- Photographic I.D is needed for authorised persons not known to staff; this includes parents.
- On collection, parents/ guardians are encouraged to meet with staff so they can share information about the child's day.
- Children MUST be signed out upon departure and the time noted
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool should be informed if one parent does not have guardianship and access to their child.
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool should be informed immediately of any changes to those authorised to collect their child.
- Under NO circumstances will a child be released to the care of a person unknown to staff or unauthorised by a parent/guardian
- Parents are asked to notify Ardfinnan Community Playschool of any changed to their nominated persons
- Educators are able to seek emergency medical assistance for a child as required without seeking further authorisation from a parent or guardian (i.e., medical practitioner, ambulance or hospital) including for those emergencies relating to asthma and anaphylaxis.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool reserves the right to refuse entry to the service of any individual authorised or otherwise if it is determined that they pose a risk of harm to the safety, health and welfare of the staff and children.

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The service reserves the right to contact an alternative authorised contact on the child's record to collect if they determine the authorised contact that has arrived could pose a risk to the child.

### Separated and Divorced Parents

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this. By law, an unmarried mother is the automatic guardian of a child born outside of marriage. In some circumstances, unmarried fathers have automatic access. The service should be informed about access rights. Unmarried fathers will automatically become guardians of their children if they meet a cohabitation requirement. An unmarried father who cohabits for 12 months with the child's mother, including 3 months following a child's birth, will automatically become the child's guardian. This provision is not retrospective, so guardianship will only be acquired automatically where the parents live together for at least 12 months (applies to children born after 18 January 2016.)

- We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a court order is in place.
- We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
- Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask you to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there are any legal documents i.e., custody order, barring order we would ask you to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

### Late Collection

Ardfinnan Community Playschool are vigilant in adhering to all HSE ratios in line with childcare regulations. Late collections present various difficulties for staff. It may affect ratio's when new children arrive and other children have not yet been collected. It also results in overtime for staff. For this reason, a fine will be applied for children that are not collected at their designated time. This has been calculated to cover two members of staff wages equal to €5 for every 5 min thereafter. This fine will be applied for parents who collect their child later than 10 minutes. The first instance will result in a parent being informed, however on the 2nd occasion the fine will be applied.

### In Case of Emergency

Ardfinnan Community Playschool understands that on a rare occasion the unexpected happens and an unauthorised person may have to collect the child. When this happens parents/guardians MUST make contact with the service prior to collection time informing them of their situation and who will be collecting their child, they can offer a password/code which will be known to staff and the unauthorised person and once staff are satisfied there are no child welfare issues, they may sign out the child. A picture of the person may also be required for recognition.

Persons who have not been named in the enrolment form by the parent/guardian must:

- Have a dated note from the parent/guardian allowing the child to leave with them and/or parents have contacted the service informing them of who is collecting the child
- Present photo identification and agreed password/code given to them by the child's parent/guardian.
- Parents are asked to call to the service at their earliest convenience to sign the collection permission form.

### Parents/guardians/carers who arrive for children in an 'unfit state'

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It may happen that a person arrives for a child in an 'unfit state' due to illness, drugs or alcohol. Where the condition is severe, it may be quite distressing for staff members who have concerns for the child's safety and/or wellbeing. The Children First Act 2015, Article 10 requires that a provider of a relevant service shall ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service. In this regard Ardfinnan Community Playschool will always act in the child's best interests. In the case of a nominated carer who is not a guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.

In the case of a parent/guardian being in an unfit state, the following measures may be adopted where appropriate:

1. Attempt to get the parent/guardian to take some time before they leave with the child, for example invite them to sit down for a cup of tea/coffee and talk with a staff member.
2. Offer to contact a family member or friend, or the person(s) listed as the child's emergency contact person on their enrolment form.
3. Offer to call a taxi.

If the parent/guardian rejects the above suggestions and insists on taking the child, the service will follow their Child Safeguarding Procedures by contacting An Garda Síochána where there is a perceived risk to the child for example through negligent driving or the person's inability to appropriately supervise the child on the way home.

#### **Procedure if an unauthorised or unknown person attempts to remove a child from the service**

- If an unauthorised or unknown person tries to take a child from the service, stay calm, and ask for the person's identification with a photograph.
- Emphasise the rules and procedures you are obliged to follow whenever you allow a child to leave the service.
- If possible, give the person a copy of your policies to show that these rules apply to everyone, including grandparents, siblings, other relatives, neighbours and family friends.
- Explain that because you are legally bound to follow the instructions of the person with legal guardianship and you cannot allow the child to leave unless you have that person's personal or written authorisation.
- If a person (even a child's parent or parent's partner) is not a guardian and does not have legal custody and is not otherwise authorised by the person who has legal custody, a child should not be released to the unauthorised person.
- If the unauthorised or unknown person insists, telephone the parent/guardian who has legal custody and inform them of the situation.
- If you feel that the situation is getting out of control or if the person threatens you or the children in your care in any way, do not hesitate to call An Garda Síochána.

Adequate supervision is provided to ensure that no one can remove a child from the service without at least one staff member's knowledge and a record being kept. Any person, including a parent/guardian, who comes to take a child out of the service, must be over 18 and must make contact directly with an appropriate member of staff before doing so.

#### **Communication of Policy**

All parents/guardians will be informed of this Policy on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

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The policy statement will be included in the Parent/Guardian Handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with the staff team at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to all staff team members and parents in the Policy Folder located in the office.

Parents may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents and all staff members will receive notification of any updates.

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## GOVERNANCE

# GDPR DATA PROTECTION

## **INTRODUCTION: Why This Policy Exists**

ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL (hereafter referred to the "Service") needs to gather and use certain information about individuals.

These can include parents/guardians, children, clients, suppliers, business contacts, employees, and other people the organisation has a relationship with or may need to contact. This policy describes how this personal data must be collected, handled, and stored to meet the organisation's data protection standards — and to comply with the law.

The purpose of this document is to explain to staff and employees what can and cannot be done with this information and forms an essential part of awareness training for all staff.

This data protection policy ensures that the Service:

- Complies with data protection law and follow good practice,
- Protects the rights of staff, clients and partners,
- Is open about how it stores and processes individuals' data, and
- Protects itself from the risks of a data breach.

## **Safeguarding Against Data Protection and Security Risks**

This policy helps to protect the Service from some very real data security risks, including:

- Breaches of security and confidentiality. For instance, information being given out inappropriately.
- Reputational damage. For instance, the Service could suffer if hackers successfully gained access to sensitive data.
- The risk of large fines or sanctions being imposed by the authorities.
- The risks of being sued for damages by individuals whose data has been mishandled.

## **DATA PROTECTION LAW AND CORE PRINCIPLES**

### **The Laws**

The Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003 (the "Data Protection Acts") and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") describe how organisations including our Service must collect, handle, and store personal information. These rules apply regardless of whether data is stored electronically, on paper, or on other materials.

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To comply with the law, personal information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely, and not disclosed unlawfully.

The Data Protection Acts and the GDPR are underpinned by eight important principles. These, and a description of how they are implemented within the Service, are described below.

### The principles - Management of Personal Data

All personal data collected and held by the Service is managed strictly within the eight guiding principles as set out in the GDPR. **Personal Data must be:**

- **Processed Fairly and Lawfully:** At the time we collect information about individuals, they are made aware of the uses for that information. Where information is disclosed to third parties, this is also set out and explained. This information is set out in the Service's Privacy Notices.
- **Processed Only for Specific Lawful Purposes:** Personal information is only kept for clearly described and explicit purposes. The types of information retained and the specific purposes it is used for and details of any third-party disclosures are set out in the Service's Register of Personal Data Records.
- **Adequate, Relevant, and Not Excessive:** The Service collects sufficient information to provide an early childhood care and education service to children and their families. The data collected is set out in our Privacy Notices and Register of Personal Data Records.
- **Kept Accurate and Up-to-Date:** The personal data that the service collects is checked for accuracy at the time of first collection, and the data subjects (e.g., parents, guardians, staff and others) are given the opportunity to update information freely whenever they are in contact with the service over the duration of the period that they attend (children, parents. Guardians) or work in the service (staff).

Personal information is retained for such time as required to provide the required services to staff and clients - or to comply with the relevant industry standards, legal requirements or guidelines. These are set out in detail in the Service's Personal Data Register with the associated retention guidelines. Once data has reached the retention threshold, it will be authorised for secure disposal and/or deletion.

- **Processed in Accordance with the Rights of Data Subjects:** Where staff or clients wish to exercise their subject rights in terms of Data Access, correction, or erasure this will be honoured as set out in the Service's Subject Access Request handling procedure.
- **Kept Secure and Protected in Appropriate Ways:** All personal information held within the Service is kept securely, and protected as described below under Information Security Guidelines, and set out in more detail in the Service's Information Security Overview document.
- **Protected Against Transfer to Countries Without Adequate Safeguards:** No personal data is currently transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA). If this ceases to be the case, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the necessary safeguards are put in place and that the target country or territory can guarantee an adequate level of protection

### Personal Data and Handling of Special Categories (Sensitive) Personal Data

- **Personal Data:** Under GDPR, 'Personal Data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject').

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In other words, any information that is clearly about a particular person. In certain circumstances, this could include anything from someone's name to their physical appearance.

The definition is wide ranging but typically within the child-care environment would include:

- Names of individuals
- Postal addresses
- Email addresses
- Telephone numbers
- Photographs
- PPSN numbers
- Staff and Parent's Bank Account details and any and all other information relating to individuals.

### **Special Categories of Personal Data**

This is a particular set of sensitive data that can only be collected and used if specific conditions have been met and which must be treated with extra security. The categories are:

- Racial or ethnic origin;
- Political opinions;
- Religious or philosophical beliefs;
- Trade union membership;
- Genetic data;
- Biometric data (where processed to uniquely identify someone);
- Data Concerning health; or
- Data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation

**Under GDPR, processing of these special categories of information is prohibited unless certain conditions have been met.**

Within the Early Years environment this means that **Ardfinnan Community Playschool will obtain explicit consent from the data-subject** - i.e., the staff member, or parent/guardian(s) - in each case.

**The service will take care to obtain this consent at the time an employee first joins the Service or when a parent/guardian or parents/guardians register their child using the appropriate enrolment forms.**

The records of consent are retained securely for the periods recommended in the Data Retention Policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLIANCE**

### **Policy Scope**

Everyone who works for or with the Service has responsibility for ensuring data is collected, stored, and handled appropriately. Each person that handles personal data must ensure that it is handled and processed in line with this policy and data protection principles. Specific responsibilities are outlined in more detail below.

### **Management**

Persons with responsibility for the implementation of the policy are as follows:

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Administrator/ Data Protection Officer: Elaine Cowan  
 Data Controller: Elaine Cowan and Erica Condon  
 Child Protection Designated Liaison Person: Erica Condon

- Management will ensure that the basic principles of data protection are explained to staff and parents/guardians. This will be done during staff induction, staff meetings and if possible, through the Service's parent handbook/notice board.
- There are regular updates to data protection awareness, so that data protection is a "living" process aligned to the way the service conducts its business.
- The Data Controller will periodically check data held regarding accuracy and will complete regular security reviews.
- Non-compliance of the data protection and other policies of the Service may invoke the disciplinary policy and procedure.
- Confidential and personal information about the Service's children, parents or guardians, and staff will only be shared by Management, Data Controllers, and Designated Child Protection Liaison Persons in relation to child safety, in line with our Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement. Any breach of confidentiality by any member of staff will lead to disciplinary action.

#### **The Data Controller (see designated person above)**

To ensure the implementation of this policy, the Service has designated a Data Controller. All enquiries relating to the holding of personal data should be referred to the Data Controller in the first instance.

The Data Controller will:

- Inform the person or persons involved a breach of confidentiality has occurred and their personal data may have been compromised. A record of this will be kept on the employee's file or child's file as relevant.
- Investigate where the breach of security has occurred and invoke the disciplinary policy if necessary.
- Check that additional measures are in place to ensure confidentiality.
- Review and update the Data Protection Policy if required.
- Check that any information kept is necessary for running the Service.
- Check to see if clerical and computer procedures are adequate to ensure accuracy.
- Reassure parents/guardians that the Data Protection Policy has been reviewed and additional measures to ensure security.
- Advise and inform employees of the need to ensure confidentiality through additional staff training and re-implementation of the Data Protection Policy.

Employees will be required to sign off to confirm they have read and understand the Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

#### **Employees Responsibilities**

As an employee, you are responsible for:

- Checking that any information that you provide in connection with your employment is accurate and up to date.
- Notifying the Service of any changes to information you have provided, for example changes of address.
- Ensuring that you are familiar with and follow the Data Protection Policy.

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- Ensuring that any personal data you hold, whether in electronic or paper format, is kept securely.
- Personal information relating to children or their families is not disclosed either verbally or in writing, accidentally or otherwise, to any unauthorised third party.

### Sanctions and Disciplinary Action

Given the serious consequences that may arise, the Service may invoke the disciplinary policy and procedure in relation to employees. Sanctions include warnings up to and including dismissal for breaching the rules and guideline on data. In the case of contractors or external service providers, serious breaches of the policies and procedures can and will be deemed grounds for termination of contractual agreements.

Any breach of the data protection policy, either deliberate or through negligence, may lead to disciplinary action being taken and could in some cases result in a criminal prosecution.

### Compliance Monitoring and Review

The Service will undertake regular reviews of the internal operation and changes in the legislation to ensure on going compliance with Data Protection Regulation. These will comprise of an annual review.

## INFORMATION SECURITY - GENERAL GUIDELINES

### Overview

- Access to the information should be restricted to authorised staff on a “need-to-know” basis and where data is needed to carry out their job descriptions.
- **Data should not be shared informally.** When access to confidential information is required, employees can request it from management (as outlined above in this policy).
- The Service will provide training to all employees to help them understand their responsibilities when handling data.
- Employees should keep all data secure by taking sensible precautions and following the guidelines below.
- **Strong passwords must be used**, and they should never be shared.
- **Personal data should not be disclosed** to unauthorised people, either within the Service or externally.
- Data should be **regularly reviewed and updated** if it is found to be out of date. If no longer required, it should be deleted and disposed of.
- **Employees should request help** from their manager or the Data Controller if they are unsure about any aspect of data protection.

### Data Storage

The security of personal information relating to children and families is a very important consideration under the Data Protection Acts. Appropriate security measures will be taken by the Service to protect unauthorised access to this data and to the data it is collecting and storing on behalf of the DCYA.

A minimum standard of security will include the following measures:

- Access to the information should be restricted to authorised staff on a “need-to-know” basis. Management will assign responsibilities regarding data at induction. Authorised staff are those identified by management and made known to such staff.
- Manual files will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet located away from public areas.
- Computerised data will be held under password protected files with a limited number of authorised staff.
- Any information which needs to be disposed of will be done so carefully and thoroughly.

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**The Service's premises at Lady's Abbey, Ardfinnan have the following security arrangements.**

- CCTV cameras monitor all outside areas
- High locked gates and railings surround premise
- Building is alarmed when not opened
- Access is granted by using a buzzer system when playschool is opened

If you have any questions or concerns about where or how to store data, please refer to the manager or data controller as outlined above.

When data is **stored on paper**, it is kept in a secure place where unauthorised people cannot see it. These guidelines also apply to data that is usually stored electronically but has been printed out for some reason:

- When not required, the paper or files will be kept in a **locked drawer or filing cabinet**.
- Employees will make sure paper and printouts are **not left where unauthorised people could see them** (for example, parents should not have access or see other parents' names/phone numbers).
- **Data should be shredded** and disposed of securely when no longer required.

When data is **stored electronically**, it must be protected from unauthorised access, accidental deletion and malicious hacking attempts:

- Data will be **protected by strong passwords** that are changed regularly and never shared between employees.
- If data is stored on removable media (e.g., a CD or USB key device), these should be kept locked away when not being used.
- Data should be stored on designated drives and servers and should only be uploaded to approved cloud computing services.
- Servers containing personal data should be sited in a secure location.
- Data should be backed up frequently. Those backups should be tested regularly in line with the Service's standard backup procedures.
- All servers and computers containing data should be protected by an approved security software

#### **Data Use**

Personal data is at often at the greatest risk of loss, corruption, or theft when it is being used or accessed:

- When working with personal data, employees should ensure the screens of their computers/tablets/apps are always locked when left unattended
- Personal data should not be shared informally.
- Personal data shared by email should be downloaded, stored securely, and then deleted.
- Data must be encrypted before being transferred electronically.
- The manager can explain how to send data to authorised external contacts.
- Employees should not save copies of personal data to their own computers. Always access and update the central copy of any data.

#### **Data Accuracy**

**The law requires Ardfinnan Community Playschool to take reasonable steps to ensure data is kept accurate and up-to-date.**

The more important it is that the personal data is accurate, the greater the effort we will put into ensuring its accuracy. It is the responsibility of all employees who work with data to take all reasonable steps to ensure it is kept as accurate and up to date as possible.

- Data will be held in as few places as necessary. Staff will not create any unnecessary additional data sets.
- Staff will take every opportunity to ensure data is updated (for instance, by updating parent's contact information).
- The Service will make it easy for data subjects to update the information held about them, over the phone, or by email.
- Data will be updated as and when inaccuracies are discovered. For instance, if a member can no longer be reached on their stored telephone number, it should be removed from the database.

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### Data Disclosure to Third Parties

As the Data Controller, the Service is ultimately responsible for any personal data passed to third parties and care must always be given to procedures and security.

The only data disclosed to third parties in the normal course of events is as described in the Service's Privacy Notices and Register of Personal Data Records.

In certain circumstances, the Data Protection Acts allow personal data to be disclosed to external agencies without the consent of the data subject. Any requests from external bodies and agencies not specifically provided for in legislation including An Garda Síochána, should be in writing.

**Under these circumstances the Service will disclose requested data; however, the Data Controller must ensure the request is legitimate, seeking assistance from The Board of Management and from the Service's legal advisers where necessary.**

Please note that information may need to be disclosed to authorised third parties. The Service will always check validity of any requests made.

The following list includes examples of such organisations but is not exhaustive:

- An Garda Síochána
- Early Years Inspection Team
- DES Inspection Team
- Pobal Compliance Officers
- DCYA and Childcare Committees
- Insurance Company
- Health and Safety Authority
- Workplace Relations Commission
- Revenue Commissioners
- HR Advisors
- Other Professional Advisors

Please note that where information may need to be disclosed to authorised third parties,

**Ardfinnan Community Playschool will always check validity of any requests** made before release of the data.

#### ***Note: Data Collected Through Garda Vetting***

***The Service understands that sensitive information may be identified through Garda Vetting. In the event that an employee's Garda vetting raises concerns the information will be dealt with on a confidential basis. All information pertaining to such a situation must be stored in the same way as other data. The Service will not pass on a copy of an employee's Garda Vetting Form to any other party. The Service will hold original Garda Vetting forms.***

***We will also hold copies of police checks for staff who have lived in other countries (from age 18 years). The staff member holds the original and we hold a certified copy.***

### Data Erasure and Disposal

When documentation or computer files containing personal data are no longer required, the information must be disposed of carefully to continue to ensure the confidentiality of the data.

For paper-based files and information no longer required, employees should safely dispose of documents or media in shredding receptacles. The data will be shredded onsite.

In the case of personal information held electronically, temporary files containing personal information will be reviewed regularly and deleted when no longer required.

When personal data reaches the point where the retention period has expired, the information should also be securely deleted and removed.

In the event that IT equipment containing personal data is no longer required, all data stored on the devices must be removed prior to disposal or the equipment must be destroyed by a certified supplier who will provide a Certificate of Destruction to conform to the GDPR regulations

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## CCTV

**Ardfinnan Community Playschool** is a Data Controller as defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and is responsible for the data/information collected using CCTV.

Usage of CCTV is in line with the principles set out in **The Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003**, and the **2016 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**: Where CCTV contains footage of images which can be clearly identified as a recognisable person; it is deemed to be Personal Data and is covered by the Data Protection Acts and Regulation. In short, where a data controller uses a CCTV, it is obliged to comply with all associated data protection obligations.

### Purpose of the CCTV

The system has been installed by the service with the primary purpose of ensuring the safety of children in our care, and helping to ensure the safety of all staff, parents/guardians and visitors, consistent with respect for the individuals' privacy.

This will be achieved by monitoring the system to:

- Assist in the **PREVENTION and DETECTION OF CRIME**,
- Building entrance can allow us to **IDENTIFY VISITORS** arriving at the service
- Increases **SECURITY** at the premises 24/7 will help to deter burglars and keep your staff and children safe

The system will **not** be used:

- To provide recorded images for the Internet,
- To provide images for a third party other than An Garda Síochána, Tusla, or the Child and Family Agency during their enquiries,
- For continuous monitoring of staff,
- For monitoring staff performance,
- As a supervision tool, or
- For recording conversations.

**Note:** If after viewing the CCTV for any of the reasons stated above, incidents of inappropriate practice or breach of policies are observed, these can be brought to the attention of the employee. The employees should be given the opportunity to view the footage. Depending on the circumstances, this may result in the discipline policy and procedure being invoked.

### Fairness

The Service and its management respect and support the individual's entitlement to go about his/her lawful business, and this is the primary consideration in the operation of CCTV.

Although there will be inevitably some loss of privacy with CCTV, cameras are not used to monitor the progress or activities in the ordinary course of lawful business. New employees will be informed immediately at induction that a surveillance system is in operation. Parents/guardians will be informed when they enrol their child. They will be informed of the purpose of the CCTV and what it can and cannot be used to monitor.

### Responsibilities of Management

Management is responsible for the operation of the system and for ensuring compliance with this policy. In particular:

- To ensure the system is always operational,
- To ensure that servicing and repairs are carried out as necessary to the system,
- To respond to any individual's written request to view a recording that exists of him/her or his/her children,
- To ensure prominent signage is in place that will make individuals aware that they are entering a CCTV area.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained at all time.

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Recorded information will be stored in the office and will only be available to those directly connected with achieving the objectives of the system.

### **Location of Cameras**

The choice of sites for locations of CCTV Cameras will be in line with the primary purposes outlined above, i.e., where they assist in ensuring the safety of children and the safety of all staff, parents/guardians and visitors. Cameras will not be in areas where people expect to have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

The following areas are currently monitored by CCTV:

- Outside areas of the premises are monitored by CCTV

### **Signage**

Signage will be clearly displayed advising that CCTV is in operation for ensuring the safety of children in our care, and helping to ensure the safety of all staff, parents/guardians and visitors. There are two signs advertising the usage of CCTV, one beside the main entrance door and one in the reception area.

### **Right to View or Access Recordings**

In line with the requirements of the GDPR, data subjects have the right to request access to their images or personal data captured by CCTV. Management will respond to a request to view a recording by allowing the viewing to take place in the presence of management on the premises. This is to protect other children/staff that may be present on the recording.

### **Sharing or Copying Recordings with Data Subjects (i.e., parents, guardians, or staff)**

Any person whose image is recorded on a CCTV system also has a right to seek and be supplied with a copy of their own personal data from the footage. To exercise that right, a person must make an application in writing or by email. The data controller must respond within 30 days.

In the first instance, the individual should be asked whether they would be satisfied with merely viewing the images recorded.

Recordings will however be provided, where formally requested by parents, guardians, or staff.

- Requests for access to recordings must be made in writing, or by email.
- Sufficient information must be provided to locate the relevant recording, a specific date, and reasonable time window.
- Viewings will take place, if appropriate, in the service in the presence of management.
- Management will have 30 days to respond.
- If a copy of recording is given to a third party, that third party must sign a declaration form that they will not share the tape with anyone else, copy it, or use it for unauthorised purposes.
- An incident report will be completed for each incident requiring investigation.

If access to or disclosure of the images is allowed, then the following should be documented:

- The date and time at which access was allowed or the date on which disclosure was made,
- The identification of any third party who was allowed access or to whom disclosure was made,
- The reason for allowing access or disclosure,
- The extent of the information to which access was allowed or which was disclosed, and
- The identity of the person authorising such access.

Where images of parties other than the requesting data subject appear on the CCTV footage, the onus lies on the Service to pixelate or otherwise redact or darken out the images of those other parties before supplying a copy of the footage or stills from the footage to the requestor.

If the system does not have the facilities to carry out that type of editing, an editing company may need to be hired to carry it out. If an editing company is hired, then the Manager or designated member of staff needs to ensure that there is a contractual relationship between the Data Controller and the editing company.

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**Retention Period**

Recordings will be retained for no longer than 30 days (or as defined in the Service Personal Data Register & Data Retention policy - unless there is requirement to retain CCTV footage to assist with the investigation of incidents, accidents, or other serious issues.

**DATA BREACHES**

**Definition:** A data breach is an incident in which the Service's staff or client's **personal data or that of a child has been lost, accessed, and/or disclosed in an unauthorised fashion.**

This would include, for instance, loss or theft of a laptop containing client or staff details, an email with personal information being sent to the wrong recipient, as well as more organised incidents of external hacking.

**Responsibility and Immediate Action Required**

All employees have a responsibility to take immediate action if there is a data breach.

- If an employee suspects at any time and for any reason that a breach may have occurred, then there is a **need to report it to the Administrator/Data Controller as an urgent priority**
- Once notification of an actual or suspected breach has been received, the Manager/Data Controller will put the **Data Breach Procedure** into operation with immediate effect.

**DATA SUBJECT RIGHTS/SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST HANDLING****Privacy Notices**

The Service aims to ensure that individuals are aware that their data is being processed and that they understand:

- How the data is being used, and
- How to exercise their rights.

For parents of children this is set out in the Service's **Privacy Notice**, provided when they first apply to register their child with the Service.

For new staff members, this is set out as part of the contract and induction material supplied at time of recruitment.

**Subject Access Requests**

All individuals who are the subject of personal data held by the Service are entitled to:

- Ask **what information** the Service holds about them and why.
- Ask **how to gain access** to it.
- Be informed **how to keep it up to date.**
- Be informed how the Service is **meeting its data protection obligations.**

If a person requesting this information from the Service, this is called a Subject Access Request.

The handling of access requests is described in more detail in the **Subject Access Request ("SAR")**

**Handling Procedure.**

Sharing of CCTV Images with Garda Síochána or other Authorised Third Parties

At times it may be necessary at times to provide copies of recordings to An Garda Síochána or other authorised parties. CCTV footage should only be provided to An Garda Síochána when a formal written request is provided to the data controller stating that Garda Síochána is investigating a criminal matter.

For practical purposes, and to expedite a request speedily in urgent situations, a verbal request may be sufficient to allow for the release of the footage sought. Any such verbal request must be followed up with a formal written request. It is recommended that a log of all Garda Síochána requests is maintained by data controllers and processors.

There is a distinction between a request by Garda Síochána to view CCTV footage and to download copies of CCTV footage. In general, Garda Síochána making a request to simply view footage on the premises of a data controller or processor would not raise any specific concerns from a data protection perspective.

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For authorised third parties, similar rules apply - copies of CCTV footage can be viewed or made available subject to the requirements and restrictions as set out above.

## GOVERNANCE

# CONFIDENTIALITY

### STATEMENT

The purpose of the confidentiality policy is to ensure that the rights of all children and parents are respected at all times. Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to keeping all information about the children, families, staff and volunteers using the service confidential. Unless there is a child protection obligation for to disclose such information or the service is legally obliged to do so.

### PRINCIPLE

This policy is underpinned by the Freedom of Information Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2002 and Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

### PROCEDURE: CHILDREN

- Parents have the right to access the files and records of their children, but will not have access to information about any other child
- Staff will not discuss individual children, other than for the purposes of curriculum planning/group management, with people other than the parents/carers of that child
- Accidents resulting in injury will be shared with the authorised person who collects a child. Information of a sensitive nature will only be shared with parents of that child and any person that the parent has nominated to share information with as noted on the child's registration form
- Feedback is given directly to parents on their child's progress
- Information about a child's medical needs or status, or concerns about child protection issues will be kept in a locked file and will only be available to authorised personnel.
- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only
- All confidential information will be stored securely, information is shared on a need-to-know basis
- In the event of a suspicion of child abuse, the mandated person along with the Designated Liaison Person will contact Tusla

**Parents/ guardians cannot be guaranteed confidentiality in the event of a suspected abuse necessitating reporting**

### PROCEDURES: STAFF

- All matters relating to Ardfinnan Community Playschool and staff are confidential
- Staff members must not disclose any trade secrets or other information of a confidential nature relating to their employment
- Staff members may not disclose any information relating to individuals who avail of our service (children, parents, guardians, carers)
- Staff members must not at any time remove any documents, computer software or items containing any confidential information from the premises

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**PROCEDURES: FILE MANAGEMENT**

- All records of children and information supplied by parents/guardians are kept in a confidential file, are not seen by anyone other than staff members, the parents/guardians (their own child's details only) and Tusla inspectors

ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL is aware of the principles of the Freedom of Information Act 1998, and the Data Protection Act 2002 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

**GOVERNANCE****MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS****Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool uses the internet, photographic and recording devices to support the provision of a quality service for children and families.

Parents/guardians are fully informed where technology is used as part of the curriculum or programme and how the internet is used as a learning tool within the service.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that photographs, video and audio recordings are increasingly used to document children's learning and development, to support quality assurance and to communicate with families and learning communities we have developed this policy to ensure the wellbeing of all within our playschool.

**Principle**

This policy was developed with regard to Regulation 10 and Regulation 17 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015, Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People 2002 and Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF)

The purpose of this policy is to support the Child Protection policy and to ensure the rights and privacy of all children is respected.

**A Parent/Guardian Consent Form (as part of our Enrolment Form) is provided by Ardfinnan Community Playschool and must be completed and signed before any child has their photo or moving images taken or posted anywhere.**

**Photography and recording of children will only take place**

- When at least one other adult is present.
- When the child or group of children agrees to be photographed.
- When the parents/guardians have given their consent

**Policy Guidelines**

Digital equipment remains in the service at all times and is stored securely when not in use.

Images in hard copy are returned to parents and images are deleted from digital records when children leave the service in accordance with GDPR requirements

Photography and recording of children while they are in the service by any parent must only be taken with the consent of management and other parents.

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All use of the internet, photographic and recording devices will be considered within our risk assessment process. We do our best to ensure that all parents have the same level of access to information shared about their child's learning and development while in the service.

Images and recordings are stored safely and appropriately returned to parents and/or disposed of/deleted when no longer needed for the purpose for which they were taken.

We request that photos or images taken of children while attending the setting are not posted elsewhere by others without the consent of parents/guardians.

Non-staff photographers are never allowed to have unsupervised access to children.

### **Email and Internet Usage**

The internet is not to be accessed by children unless under the supervision of service educators for the purpose of educational research or learning opportunities. The email system and internet must only be used by staff for business purposes which include the following activities:

- Communication on matters relating to job requirements or for administration purposes.
- Communication of information relating to the service.
- Research of new technologies and educational resources.

What is unacceptable use of email and internet?

- Providing children with opportunities to unsupervised internet access or access to inappropriate internet content, that could affect a child's health, welfare and development.
- To access, download or store inappropriate, defamatory or offensive material.
- For personal financial gain or profit.
- To disclose or publish confidential information about children, families or staff.
- For posting messages to any internet bulletin or discussion board, newsgroup or other publicly accessible discussion forum except for authorised business purposes.
- Offensive language and language that would breach any other service policy.
- The service reserves the right to block inappropriate websites

### **Communicating Information via Email**

All guidelines and policies relating to signing and authorisation for written communications must be observed when sending electronic mail. Staff must keep in mind that anything created on a service computer network or the internet may be reviewed by others. Copies of any business-related electronic communications and attachments (sent or received) should be kept in accordance with proper record-keeping practices.

### **Social Networking Sites and social media Tools**

The requirements outlined above in relation to the use of service email and internet systems apply to social networking sites and other social media tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has an active Facebook page which it updates on a regular basis with notices of our activities, holiday dates, general information and pictures of some arts and crafts the children have done. The playschool Leader also uses private message on Facebook to send pictures of their child progress in playschool, these pictures are not for general publication.

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**Staff**

- Must not share photography, videos or information about any child or parent on any of their social network sites
- must not make any derogatory comments about the service, its team members, contractors, or children/families attending the service on social networking sites;
- When commenting either on blogs or in public forums, be mindful of their association to the service and their obligation to be responsible and positive in their portrayal of the service.
- Photographs, videos and/or information about other staff members are not to be posted without the specific permission of the individual.
- Staff are not to divulge or discuss any confidential or personal information obtained while employed or associated with the service.

**Parents**

- Are asked not to share photography, videos or information about any other child or parent on their social network site without the permission of the other parent.
- Are asked not to share photography, videos or information about any staff members
- On occasions we post group pictures of the children e.g., Christmas Concert, Graduation parents are informed of this on enrolling their child
- Ask that parents refrain from sharing private pictures of their child in playschool that are messaged to them.

**Television**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool does not incorporate the use of television in our curriculum; it does not form part of our daily or weekly activities. The only exception to the rule is a special occasion which can be linked to our curriculum or celebration, e.g., Christmas holidays

On these rare occasions it is the responsibility of staff to ensure the programme is age appropriate and educational. Consideration must also be given to appropriate viewing and it is noted that even age-appropriate programmes can be scary.

**Telephone calls and mobile phones**

Telephones are essential for our business. Personal calls are restricted and we ask staff to keep these to a minimum. The use of mobile phones is not permitted during working hours; the service understands that from time-to-time staff may need to make or take personal calls but they are asked that this be restricted to emergency basis. We ask that all staff members turn off phones and use lockers to store their phones during work hours.

All staff are asked to only use the services mobile phone and iPad to take photos and videos of the learning that occurs in the playschool and on outings and of the children attending our playschool.

**GOVERNANCE**

# STORAGE OF RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

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**Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to meeting our obligations to store records under the relevant regulations.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has put together a step-by-step approach to familiarise all staff members with the relevant regulations as well as the procedures for storing records.

**Principle**

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and informed by the Workplace Relations Commission, Data Protection Act and Revenue.

**Procedure**

- Appropriate filing space will be allocated to store records to ensure they are kept securely and confidentiality
- All staff will be informed of how long each type of record must be kept
- A log will be maintained of the records being stored
- An appropriate person (usually the manager) will be appointed with responsibility to store and maintain the records
- All records will be dated and signed by the appropriate person

**The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 requires all services to keep the following records:**

**Type of Record Time to be retained**

- Record of all visitors -- 1 Year
- All child records -- 2 Years
- Details of daily attendance -- 2 Years
- Staff rosters -- 2 Years
- Medication administered -- 2 Years
- Any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service -- 2 Years
- Complaints received -- 2 Years

**Child Records**

In addition to the requirements under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 all services should keep **Child Records until the child is 21 years old**. This is for insurance purposes. Once a child turns 18, they have a period of 3 years to make a claim over an incident that occurred in an early years setting if their parents have not already done so. For clarity here are the type of child records you should maintain:

**Type of Record Time to be retained**

- Child attendance records Until child is 21 years' old
- Child Accident/ Incident Books Until child is 21 years' old
- Child Observations Send home with family when child finishes unless there is specific reason for keeping
- Child Development Records Send home with family when child finishes unless there is a specific reason for keeping

**All Financial Records**

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**Type of Record Time to be retained**

- CCTV footage 28 days unless an issue has been identified
- Unsolicited applications for jobs -- 1 year
- Applications for vacant post -- 1 year
- General job descriptions -- Hold until superseded
- Vacancy notifications -- 1 ½ years
- Copies of advertisement -- 1 ½ years
- Job Description -- 1 ½ years
- Applications/ C.V of applicants called for interview -- 1 ½ years

Candidates not qualified or short listed -- 1 ½ years

Candidates short listed but not successful at interview or successful but do not accept -- 1 ½ years

Interview board marking sheet and interviewers' notes -- 1 year

Allegations/ complaint -- 2 years if unfounded or investigation not warranted

Training Files -- 5 years

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**GOVERNANCE**

## **ARDFINNAN CHILDCARE COMMITTEE CLG**

### **Code of Conduct for Board Members**

**The Committee**

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG is a community based sessional preschool facility, named Ardfinnan Community Playschool, which is managed and run by a Voluntary Management Committee. This committee is made up of local people and/or parents who contribute their relevant expertise to assisting the development and sustainability of the service. It is supported by Tipperary County Childcare, Túsla and Early Childhood Ireland.

The Committee elects officers to management rolls which support the business. They have responsibilities such as

- Maintenance of premises and equipment
- Employment, support and supervision of staff
- Responsibility for all financial matters pertaining to the service
- Compliance with all relevant legislation
- Liaising with all relevant agencies
- Staff and committee training
- Review and approval of policies and procedures / objectives
- Preparation of funding submissions
- Renewal of equipment and supplies
- Fundraising
- Review of the preschools staffing requirements
- Keeping up to date with developments within the childcare sector

The elected members include a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, the following is an outline of their roll in Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG.

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### The Chairperson's Roll

- Ensures the group operates as per guidelines of the group's constitution or per company Articles of Association.
- Makes all committee members aware of their responsibilities with due regard to the above.
- Stresses the importance of confidentiality for all committee members.
- Organises meetings with the Secretary.
- Keeps order during meetings, ensuring that everyone has a turn to speak, summarises general information received from everyone and makes a proposal if a decision is necessary.
- In the event of tied votes, the Chairperson has a casting vote.
- Ensures all decisions made at meetings are minuted and acted upon
- Ensures that minutes of the previous meeting are correct and signed
- Being the contact person with relevant agencies.
- Signatory on accounts
- Ensures a satisfactory reporting mechanism between the staff and the committee.
- Ensures budgeting guidelines for expenditure are followed

### The Secretary's Roll

Works in partnership with the office administrator to maintain good record keeping of the group's data and ensures all members are notified of meetings either in writing or by telephone and ensures appropriate logos are included on stationery / advertising / recruitment material. Maintain a record of all expenses including postage, phone call, receipts for stationery etc.

Maintaining of minutes, these can be recorded in a hard back book or meeting notes retyped and circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. All decisions should be recorded and also who has responsibility for any actions to be carried out before the next meeting. A copy of the approved and signed copy of the minutes should be retained on file

Handling Correspondence, letters from relevant agencies should be filed under suitable headings in different folders according to the subject matter e.g., Pobal, Health Services Executive, Local Development. Replies drafted and reviewed with Chairperson and a copy kept on file. A summary of correspondence can be given at meetings

A.G.M., Assembles data and documents for the Annual Report for A.G.M and ensures all data is available for the AGM i.e., information for the Chairperson's reports, Secretary's Report, Treasurer's Report

### The Treasurer's Roll

The Treasurer will manage the finances of a group. This will include:

- Opening and maintaining of records of bank accounts – all to have the same group name. Arranging the Banking protocol and ensuring all monies movement approved by a minimum of 2 committee members.
- Obtains cheque books and ensures the group complies with agreed cheque signing procedure i.e., who will sign cheques and the number of signatures needed (i.e., 2 signatures). Prepares a simple cheque requisition form for each cheque to be signed at meetings once expenditure agreed.
- Maintains cheque journals and receipt books for all accounts. Ensures that one copy of bank statement for each account is sent to at least 2 committee members i.e., one copy to the Chairperson and one copy to the treasurer.

**CASH SHOULD NEVER BE ACCUMULATED OR KEPT AT HOME**

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Working in cooperation with the office administrator the treasurer shall...

- Ensures the timely payment of wages and all that this entails e.g., making sure employees are given the correct tax credits and make the right PRSI contributions, issuing of a salaries/wages payment or using the agreed banking protocol, according to the hours worked the relevant week on the time sheet, issuing a pay-slip.
- Paying out money as necessary, however within the limit agreed by the Management Committee, e.g., rental, insurance, replacement of toys, curriculum expenses.
- Presenting of regular simple accounts detailing Income and Expenditure at committee meetings.
- Sets out petty cash
- Collecting and recording Fees, where applicable, and lodging to an account.
- Lodging and recording any grants received in the correct account and ensuring they are spent on what they were claimed for.
- Supports fund-raising and handles the practicalities of counting and lodging money from fund-raising activities.

Co-operating with the business accountant ....

- Prepare the financial part of the Annual report.
- Ensure that all records are maintained as required for external auditing i.e. CRO Company Returns, Pobal, and other funding agencies.
- Ensure that all records are maintained as required for the internal auditing process
- Ensure the committee is complying with all legislation

### Code of Conduct

In accordance with the laws Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG will comply with all statutory obligations by

- The board of directors will direct the service ensuring that it has proper plans, procedures, policies, structures and resources in place to achieve its objectives.
- The directors are entirely accountable for the organisation which they govern and must manage risk and be accountable to members and other stakeholders for both its financial affairs and activities, and ensure the organisation's procedures are reviewed regularly.
- Regularly reviewing and confirming on an annual basis the adequacy of internal financial controls
- Oversee items of expenditure
- Establish and monitoring procedures for the retirement and re-appointment of board members
- Publish annual reports and financial statements
- Maintain an appropriate relationship with the external auditor
- Review the board's operation and effectiveness ensuring best practice is adhered to

### All Board and Committee Members will:

- Act in good faith and in the best interests of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG, promoting its work and reputation
- Ensure that they are loyal to the organisations aims, strategies and policies as agreed by the Board, that their interests and those of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG are not in conflict and that they conform to the highest standards of ethics

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- Integrity honesty and trustworthiness are the hallmarks of all their conduct when dealing with colleagues, employees, parents, organisations and individuals
- Integrity, honesty and trustworthiness will be the hallmarks of all my conduct when dealing with colleagues within ECI and equally when dealing with individuals and organisations outside it.
- Ensure Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG complies with all relevant legislation.
- Support the mission, values, aims, objectives and strategy of the service and abide by the constitution, articles of association, its policies and its procedures.
- Each member is required to declare their interests and absent themselves when the Board is deliberating or deciding on matters in which they, or a person or an organisation connected to them has an interest.
- Will strive to uphold the reputation of the service and those who work in it and will take an active interest in the organisation's public image and understand that each member has a duty not to do anything that may damage the reputation of the preschool.
- Will respect the committee, board and individual confidentiality.
- Will not gain materially or financially from my role as Director, beyond seeking reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.
- Each member will strive to punctually attend all board meetings (and other relevant meetings), giving apologies ahead of time to the Chairperson if unable to attend.
- Each member will study the agenda and other information sent in good time prior to meetings and be prepared to engage in debate, and if necessary, vote, on agenda items during the meeting.
- Each member will respect the authority of the Chairperson.
- Each member will accept a majority board vote on an issue as decisive and final.
- Each member will take an active involvement in the service, including contributing to special events where help is needed (e.g., Christmas show, graduation, opening nights)
- Each member will promptly undertake actions that they have agreed to take on during meetings.
- Each member of the Board understands that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in their removal from the board. Should they resign from the board, they must inform the Chairperson in advance in writing, stating their reasons for resigning
- Board members will not speak in their Board capacity about the business of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG in any public forum without prior knowledge of the Chairperson.

**Confidentiality:** all Board members must treat the information presented to them in their role as a Board member as being confidential unless the Board has authorised its release or its release is required by law. The duty is indefinite and applies even after a Board member has ceased to be a Board member.

## Code of Behaviour between Staff & Children

Our code of behaviour is based on an ethos of:

- Listening to children
- Valuing and respecting children as individuals
- Involving children in decision making, as appropriate
- Encouraging and praising children

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**Code of behaviour**

- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting and reassuring a child, it should only be in response to the need of the child, not the adult
- Staff should never physically punish or verbally abuse a child
- Staff should never tell jokes of a sexual nature in front of a child
- Staff should not develop favouritism or become over involved with any one child
- All staff must respect the personal space, safety and privacy of each child

\*\* It is not recommended that staff give lifts in their cars to an individual child, especially for long journey

**PARENTS****PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS****Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool gives parents and families opportunities to share, get involved and make suggestions about all the activities happening in our service. Families are the most important people in their children's lives and we are committed to be open, inclusive, welcoming, accepting, and respectful of all family types. As a partnership we ask families to show respect and value for all staff, children and families in return.

**Principle**

This policy is underpinned by the National Standards for Preschool Services 2010

**Procedure**

- All families will be greeted on arrival by a staff member. This is an opportunity to share information and grow the relationship between our service and families
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool has an Open Door Policy where families are welcome in the setting throughout the day
- We will share information with our families in number of ways including daily conversations, letters, emails, phone calls, our newsletter and text messages
- Information on children's progress, interests and development will be shared daily through conversation and pre-arranged appointment times
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool ensures all families are consulted with during periods of change or decision making
- There are lots of opportunities for formal and informal conversations with both staff and manager
- Involvement on management committees by parents is encouraged
- We ask families to get involved with activities, outings and fundraising events. It is voluntary and there is no obligation to take part.
- Information on how family's contribution of their skills and sharing of individual interests are valued and accommodated
- We value and appreciate any information on family customs, belief, language and culture
- As a partnership we ask all families to respect the staff, children and other families in the setting
- Any complaints, concerns or comments should follow the procedure in our Complaints Policy
- Parents are provided with a handbook giving details of the service before the child starts at the service

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Ardfinnan Community Playschool provides time to meet with parents to discuss their...

- Child's progress and documented learning
- Child's relationships and interests
- Suggestions for the service.
- Joint behaviour management if necessary
- Difficulties or concerns.

## PARENTS

# EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

### Principle

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises and welcomes all

*'...without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his/her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status'.*

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 2.1

### Statement

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we value diversity and uniqueness in people; both adult and children. We acknowledge disability as an expression of human diversity.

We uphold the social model of disability which teaches that it is with society that the problem lies, not the child or adult with different abilities.

We aim to ensure that people with specific needs or cultural differences are not excluded by barriers of rejection, discrimination, negative attitudes and poor social organisation.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a policy of equality of care, respect and value for all children. We welcome and support children with additional needs, and their families. These needs may be physical, intellectual, social and emotional. Language may be a problem due to a specific need in this area, or because English is not the first language of the child.

We aim to provide a physically accessible indoor and outdoor environment.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool displays books and posters with positive images of people with disabilities, and people from different ethnic backgrounds.

Gender biased/stereotypical posters are not encouraged.

We will work closely with external agencies e.g., HSE, Early intervention teams, etc.

We will set up an agreed means to review, examine and assess the programmes for each child.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool encourages parents to translate our mission statement into the first language of the child, for inclusion in our policies and procedures. In addition, parents of new children are encouraged to write out a few words that have special meaning to the child, so that educators can understand their needs.

Our Getting to know you form which is included in our parent handbook, allows educators to know more about the child's personal life, pets, etc., so that children can feel a link between their home and our Early Years' Service.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool undertakes to ensure all staff are trained to understand diversity in children and to foster this diversity as a positive aspect of our service.

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Discrimination against other members of staff, children or their families is seen as a serious disciplinary offence. Any bias or discriminatory conduct about any person is not acceptable.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool will undertake the necessary training in order to support children with a disability through the Access and Inclusion Model, AIM.

“The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a programme of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme in mainstream Pre-school settings.” Tipperary Child-care Committee.

### Interactions

*Ethos: To encourage warm nourishing relationships between children and educators that support and view children as strong, powerful, competent, complex and full of possibilities.*

Children need positive relationships with adults that they can trust and who respond to them in a positive manner. This is the basic foundation that they need in order to feel good about themselves and their being in the world, and secure enough to take pleasure in actively exploring and learning about themselves, people and things around them. Our Early Years Educators will endeavour to support the development of each child’s communication and social skills by responding to each child’s individual needs and enabling them to develop the ability to relate in a similar positive way to others. Our Educators will build upon their existing and emerging social and interactive communication skills by providing them with opportunities and activities to develop these skills.

Educators at Ardfinnan Community Playschool will...

- be responsive to children’s strengths, interests, abilities
- provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem,
- uphold children’s dignity and rights
- provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour
- promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- be authentic and responsive;
- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights

### Toileting

Ardfinnan Community Playschool operates a policy where all children are **fully toilet trained** prior to beginning their journey with our service. We are committed to providing all children with the opportunity to access the service regardless of their ability within the expertise and resources available and in accordance with the best interests of the child, we understand that in some cases children find it difficult to toilet train due to their special needs.

With this in mind we ask parents to make contact as soon as possible to put a care plan into place to support their child in playschool.

### Procedures

To support all children, parents, staff and management Ardfinnan Community Playschool has implemented the following procedures

### We will provide Children with....

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- A safe, accessible environment that facilitates supports and encourages a positive individual and group identity.
- Well-trained and informed staff who understand their individual culture, identity, needs and interests.
- Equal access to a differentiated and full curriculum that caters for their individual and particular needs.
- A policy that ensures that they can learn to be comfortable with difference, to identify what is fair and unfair and to be able to stand up for themselves and others.

#### **Children need:**

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Know they belong and are valued as unique individuals
- Feel strong and confident about their identity
- Know their cultural backgrounds are respected and valued
- Learn in groups that allow them all to experience success
- Engage with materials and experiences that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, gender and ability (visitors, books, music, musical instrument, cooking activities, craft, clothing, multicultural dolls, multicultural jigsaws, games, play equipment, posters and other props).
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of disabilities
- Respect the purpose for which other children's aids or assistive technology are intended.

#### **Communication**

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Diversity, Equality and Inclusion on enrolment. The Policy Statement will be included in the Parents/Guardians Handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with all staff members at induction. All policies and procedures are available during all hours of operation to staff in the office and are available on request to all parents and guardians.

#### **Communication between Parents and staff**

- Parents know that their child will have their individual learning and development needs met and that their family culture and identity will be recognised and valued.
- Parents will be communicated with clearly and effectively, and be able to communicate effectively, with staff who they trust to care for and educate their children.
- Parents will have access to and participation in our service and feel a sense of belonging when visiting.

#### **Staff members need:**

- To know and to ensure that all of the service's processes are fair, open and transparent and not discriminatory.
- To work in and be involved in providing a safe, anti-bias, accessible environment.
- Be supported to be comfortable with difference and to engage effectively with parents/guardians and families; to be able to critically think about and confidently engage in dialogue around issues of equality, diversity, inclusion, bias and discrimination.
- Be able to have effective two-way communication with all of the children they care for and educate, and with their parents/guardians and families.

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**Management will ensure that:**

- That all those who use the service or who work in it have their individual needs met as far as possible within the context of the service and that staff members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to meet the diverse needs of all of the children who use the service and their families.
- The service does not discriminate against anyone directly or indirectly, that all relevant legislation and regulation is fully complied with and that the service meets quality standards.
- All of the service's policies and procedures reflect a commitment to equality and inclusion and that the service promotes positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.
- All staff members and management (including committee members) contribute to the development and review of policies.
- Steps are taken to enable the contribution of the children to the development of policies and procedures.
- Parents/guardians are facilitated to contribute in whatever ways suit them best.
- The review and evaluation of policies is used to identify specific actions to address equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Interactions with children and curriculum/programme content are monitored to ensure appropriate content and breadth of content.

**Dealing with Discriminatory Incidents:**

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children will be informed that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remark made by one child to another) both children learn from the incident.
- Staff will endeavour to determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so staff will be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some issues may be brought into the playschool by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the service. Staff will recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions will be taken, at circle time or in a group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling children out in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. All staff will be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service. *"Children will do as we do"*

**LINC and AIM program**

LINC (Leadership for Inclusion in an Early Years Setting) this is a national programme designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in early childhood care and education settings Erica Condon is our Inclusion officer (INCO) she is completing her LINC training which is a Level 7 Special Purpose Award in Leadership is for Inclusion in an Early Years setting this year. Erica's role is to ensure best practice is being implemented in leading the inclusion of children with additional needs in our playschool. Erica will support all of our Educators to plan for, implement and review inclusive practice in our playschool.

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Erica will also engage with the children ensuring their needs, ideas, feelings and thoughts are listened to. Erica advocates on their behalf to ensure Inclusion procedures are in place. She will liaise with parents and other professionals working with their child e.g., speech therapist, through the AIM (Access and Inclusion Module) program.

### **Open Door Policy**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool operates and encourages an open-door policy. This policy encourages parents/guardians to come to visit the playschool at any time throughout the day, as we believe that co-operation between staff and parents/guardians in all aspects of decision making can benefit their child. Parents/guardians do not need to inform us of their intention to visit but if a parent or guardian would like to speak to a member of our staff about their child's learning we recommend parents make an appointment so as not to disrupt the daily routine of the children in our playschool or our child: adult ratio.

### **Change of Circumstance**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognise that details can often change throughout the duration of a child attending our playschool, phone numbers may change, addresses may change, child minders may change. With this in mind we ask that parents or guardians inform staff immediately so their child's records may be altered. This is essential in case of an emergency such as the child becoming ill at playschool.

We understand that there are times when a child's family life changes, such as, a family pet dies, parents may separate, a close family member dies. We recognise that this is a difficult time for everyone involved but it is in the best interests of the child that their "teacher" knows the situation. This will be treated with great care and only relevant staff members will be informed of any changes. The "teacher" will then be able to support the child in a positive way dealing with their circumstances.

### **Social Media**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a detailed policy on Media and Communications which covers all areas of Media and Communications; this is available to view in our office.

Our Enrolment form contains a section on Consent for use of photos and videos and how these will/may be used. These Consent forms must be signed by parents/guardians and copies of the enrolment forms will be provided for the parents when requested.

Parents/guardians have a right to refuse or to withdraw permission at any time.

Images cannot be used for purposes other than those agreed.

All images are to be stored and disposed of in line with the Data Protection GDPR 2018.

Where group photos of children are taken, they will not be shared unless consent is given by ALL parents/guardians.

The purpose of taking images must always be clearly explained to parents/guardians.

The use of any photographic or recording devices by parents or guardians must be with the consent of the designated person in charge.

Parents/guardians must be informed of their responsibilities around the taking of group photos and that it is not ok to take group photos if not all children present have consented to their photograph being taken.

Any consent must be reviewed on a regular basis and at least annually.

### **Facebook**

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Ardfinnan Community Playschool has an active Facebook page which it updates on a regular basis with notices of our activities, holiday dates, general information and pictures of some arts and crafts the children have done.

On occasions we also post group pictures of the children e.g., Christmas Concert, Graduation.

Facebook is an excellent opportunity for our playschool to connect with parents and share special photos instantly on its private message system while also posting pictures of our celebrations during the year.

Parents are given the option of allowing their child's picture to be posted by signing a consent form when enrolling their child.

**We ask that parents refrain from sharing private pictures of their child in playschool that are messaged to them.**

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## PARENTS

# Complaints Policy

### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone that comes in contact with our playschool, we welcome children's and parent's views of the service and value their feedback.

We understand that at times families may have a concern about the service. We are committed to giving careful attention and a courteous, timely response to your suggestions, comments or complaints so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our service. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

### Principle

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool endeavours to fulfil the following values in all aspects of our work:

- Respectful partnership
- Focusing on the needs and well-being of the children attending our service
- Positive engagement with parents
- Openness and sharing of information
- Professional and efficient

### Problem solving

A child, parent guardian or member of staff may express dissatisfaction with any aspect of our service, it is hoped that most issues can be resolved at this stage and become a grievance or an expression of dissatisfaction rather than becoming a complaint. Staff will take a proactive approach in dealing with an issue of dissatisfaction.

There may need to be improvements in communication, improvements in the service provided or lessons to be learnt. All episodes should be recorded in the incident/accident book as an initial recording measure and in the complaints register should a formal complaint be received.

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Where possible we endeavour to handle all complaints informally if possible. We aim to ensure making a complaint is as easy as possible and to deal with it promptly and politely. We endeavour to learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures. We aim to informally resolve a complaint as soon as possible. If your complaint cannot be dealt with informally, we will direct you to our formal complaint's procedure.

### Complaints procedure

Any complaints made about the service will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner. The following procedures will be followed:

- Complaints should be made to the room leader Erica Condon or Chairperson Elaine Bowe
- Every attempt is made to resolve the matter as amicably as possible and to the parent's satisfaction.
- If agreement cannot be reached the parent may make a formal complaint in writing to the chairperson Elaine Bowe, letter should include ....
  - ◆ Name
  - ◆ Address
  - ◆ Day time telephone number
  - ◆ Full details of the complaint, including relevant dates and times
  - ◆ Names of those involved (including any staff)
  - ◆ Copies of any relevant documentations
  - ◆ Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (apology, explanation etc.)
  - ◆ State your preferred method of communication
- The complaint is recorded.
- If the complaint is made against a member of staff, the staff member must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and be given full details. The staff member will be given the right to reply. If determined necessary by the registered provider, a staff member whom a complaint has been made about may be placed on paid suspension pending the investigation.
- If a complaint against a staff involves a child protection concern a second separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our child protection procedures.
- The parent/guardian is sent an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and told how it will be dealt with, by whom, and within what time limit. The person investigating the formal complaint will keep dated records summarising what has been said and done by those involved.
- The complaint will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner.
- Parent/guardians will be assured that making a complaint will not adversely affect their on-going interaction with the service
- All staff must participate in the investigation of a complaint, as required. Any staff member involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.
- If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the outcome, he or she may make a written request to go to the third stage of the procedure, which involves an independent mediator or panel.
- The panel will include an external mediator e.g., a representative of the Tipperary County Childcare Committee or Túsla

- This panel will not include any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant or staff member
- The person making the complaint will be advised that they are free to bring another person with them to the meeting and to record minutes.
- The panel, having considered all the relevant material and talked with all those concerned, will reach a decision and if necessary, make recommendations. These recommendations will be issued in writing to all involved.
- The complainant and other interested parties involved will be informed of the outcome following the recommendations of the panel.
- Records in writing of any complaints, including any outcomes, must be retained for a period of two years and should be available for inspection.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool will endeavour to support you in making your complaint.

Contact Details

Complaints can be made by calling to the playschool,

Telephone: 052/7466448

Email: ardfinnanplayschool@gmail.com

Postal Address: Ardfinnan Community Playschool,  
Lady's Abbey,  
Ardfinnan,  
Clonmel,  
Co. Tipperary  
E91RP21

## CHILDREN

# PLAY CURRICULUM

### **Principle**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each child's holistic development and learning is fully encouraged and supported through the implementation of a quality play-based curriculum informed by the principles of Síolta – The National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education; Aistear-- the early childhood curriculum framework and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Framework

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that children are often filled with curiosity about the world around them and through our curriculum we have the opportunity to support and develop a lifelong love of learning for each child. Our play-based curriculum supports planned learning, spur-of-the-moment learning, adult and child led learning.

### **Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool's curriculum planning is based on the following principles:

- Quality care is educational and quality education is caring.

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- Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child.
- Learning is holistic and cannot be compartmentalised: trust, motivation, interest, enjoyment and physical and social skills are as important as cognitive/academic gains.
- The child's needs, rights, individuality and strengths are central.
- All children are entitled to equality of access and to opportunities to enjoy and to learn within a stimulating and safe care environment.

**When planning the curriculum attention and consideration is given to:**

- Children's needs including special needs.
- Children's interests.
- Children's learning styles.
- The age and developmental stage of each individual and group.
- Varied experiences and activities for the individual and group.
- Social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.
- Equality and diversity.
- Documented observations and assessments.

**Developmentally appropriate activities will be offered which support and promote children's:**

- Social and emotional development.
- Positive attitudes and values.
- Positive self-concept.
- Positive family, social and peer relationships.
- Literacy and language development.
- Mathematical development.
- Physical development.
- Positive health, safety and nutrition practices.
- Creative expression and appreciation of the arts, culture, nature and the environment.
- Understanding of right and wrong.
- Thinking, reasoning, questioning and experimentation.
- Respect for ethnic, cultural and physical diversity.
- Making choices and using their initiative.
- Spiritual and moral well-being.
- Knowledge and understanding of their world.

We aim for an equal balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities

**Observations**

Curriculum plans are informed by observations and regular evaluations and a record is kept of the planning process and of decisions made.

Skilled and careful observation is the key to helping children to learn. Observations must be carried out with proper respect for the children, for their parents/carers and for the staff. We respect children's and families' ethnicity, their cultural heritage, their religions and the languages they speak. We respect all children whatever their gifts, abilities or special learning needs. When we observe children, we attend to the whole of their development not just to certain

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aspects. Children's learning to respect one another is as important as their learning to count. Staff members meet children's needs through sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote their self-esteem.

Use of observation in our Curriculum Planning is used to:

- Review provision as a whole.
- Provide continuity of care.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and inconsistencies in the curriculum.
- Identify significant moments of learning for individual children and build on these.
- Share with parents/carers how their children are developing.
- Plan together as a team and decide what areas of learning experiences should be focused on.
- Plan and review provision for individual children.
- See changes in a child and how particular interests develop.
- Reduce assumptions and inferences.
- Increase our knowledge and understanding of children and their learning.
- Identify our own learning needs.
- Give a stronger sense of purpose in planning and development.

## **Play**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool believes that play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child, play underpins all of our curriculum planning. Children need and want to take risks when they play. We aim to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities.

We consider it essential:

- To involve parents/carers in our curriculum planning
- For our staff to have sufficient non-contact time to engage in quality curriculum planning.

## **We provide children with the opportunity to:**

- Play – Toys and play equipment that are safe are stored within easy reach of children. The environment, space and layout facilitate different types of play and activity:
  - Messy play (water, sand, clay, paint, etc.)
  - Pretend play (clothes for dressing up, variety of materials for role-play and imitation)
  - Construction play (blocks of different textures, Lego, straws, etc.)
  - Social play involving interaction with other children
  - Activities using fine finger movements (jigsaws, threading, drawing)
  - Activities involving music and drama
  - Activities involving whole body movement (ball games, running, dance, etc.)
  - Reading
  - Outdoor play
- Develop academic skills (maths games, time for reading individually and in groups)
- Enhance creativity and express themselves through art.
- Explore and develop interests and talents.

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- Learn to work as part of a team.
- Experience the satisfaction of completing both long and short-term hands-on meaningful projects with tangible results.
- Think about and develop positive character traits (such as honesty, kindness, and friendship) and social-emotional competence through projects, discussions, stories, and games.
- Develop leadership skills
- Relax and interact socially with each other.
- Learn about healthy eating and get the nutrition they need by preparing and eating healthy snacks.

### **Responsibility of Staff**

Activities will be well planned with adequate materials available. Staff members will be prepared to lead activities. All staff members have specific responsibilities for planning, preparing materials and leading activities. The children will be involved in regular meetings to help plan activities, discuss and talk about current issues in the curriculum. Staff members will be friendly, approachable and respectful of all children. All staff members are responsible for working cooperatively to ensure a safe, secure, comfortable and stimulating environment.

Staff will co-ordinate information about the individual child's needs and progress – this includes, in particular, information to and from the child's parents/carers. Staff will coordinate the planning and record keeping for individual children.

The daily schedule and the activity plans include a balance of:

- Indoor/outdoor
- Quiet/active
- Individual/small group/large group
- Gross motor/fine motor activities
- Child initiated/adult-initiated activities
- Time to respond to 'teachable moments'

There will be appropriate materials and equipment for each developmental stage. The schedule will allow transitions without children having to stand in line or to sit for long periods. Areas are to be arranged for children to do things for themselves with a minimum of adult intervention. Shelves and interest areas will be labelled appropriately using pictures and words. These will be placed in the children's line of vision. Children will be encouraged to try new activities in a safe and supportive environment. Children will be given reassurance, encouragement and appropriate praise. Children will be given reassurance, encouragement and appropriate praise.

### **Daily Routine**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool operates a flexible daily routine which enables our curriculum to change and adapt to support teachable moments, child led learning, support children who need it on any particular day for any issues e.g., child gets a new pet, new brother or sister, visit to the dentist or doctor.

The following are Ardfinnan Community Playschool principles of our daily routine:

- Children engage in enjoyable active learning experiences throughout the session.
- Children plan their activities, carry them out and are encouraged and supported to talk about them.
- Children choose, use and return materials at 'clean up time'.

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- Children solve problems and resolve conflicts.
- Children play alone and together in small and large groups.
- Adults use systematic observation to support and encourage children's development and learning.
- Children and adults play, eat, talk and learn together as partners
- Routine opportunities are provided for children to rest

#### **Our day at preschool consists of**

- **Free play** begins as a child enters the playroom, this consists of interest tables, children have free choice on what they would like to play, make, take out etc.
- **Clean up time** depends on what the children want to do, if some would like lunch, they may tidy their toys and wash up for lunch or the group as a whole will tidy up together
- **Circle time** is where we meet to chat, tell each other our news, discuss what we would like to learn next and lots more
- **Story time** happens throughout the day, staff will read to children individually or as a group, children are also encouraged to read to themselves and to others
- **Song movement time**, we have a range of musical instruments and also some great dance songs which get us all up and moving and singing along
- **Outdoor time** in winter we try get out every day even if only for a short while but at all other times the door is open and the children have the choice to go out to play or stay in the playroom
- **Lunch time** is when the child is hungry, sometimes children are too busy to eat or are hungry coming to playschool, staff are sensitive to their needs and recognise when each child needs to eat. We also encourage children to eat together developing their social skills.

#### **Times of opening**

Our morning session begins at 9:00 and ends at 12:00 Monday to Friday

Our afternoon session begins at 1:00 and ends at 16:00 Monday to Friday

#### **Adult: Child Ratio**

In accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 the ratio is 1 adult for every 11 children where the children's ages range from 2 years 6 months to 6 years. Ardfinnan Community Playschool is also compliant with regulations regarding the size of our room. The room size is 7.4 meters by 7 meters, regulatory space area requirements are 1.818 metered square per child.

#### **AISTEAR**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool implements the Aistear Framework in line with the guidelines set down by the National Curriculum Framework. It provides information for adults to help them plan for and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners within loving relationships with others.

This early learning also lays foundations for later learning, because early childhood marks the beginning of children's lifelong learning journeys, this framework is called Aistear, the Irish word for journey.

The aim of Aistear is to help every child to grow and develop as a competent and confident learner. Ultimately, according to Aistear, early childhood care and education must support a child's sense of:

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- **Well-being:** by developing meaningful relationships with children and allowing them to express their feelings
- **Identity and Belonging:** by promoting each child's uniqueness, by sharing control with the children, by providing an environment where they can find things for themselves
- **Communicating:** by asking children what they plan to do and reviewing what they have done and by talking about problems to resolve them together
- **Exploring and Thinking:** by providing a wide range of materials that children can choose to use in whatever way they desire by embracing nature at outside time by providing opportunities for mathematics and science language and literacy music and movement

These are the 4 main goals of Aistear and it proposes that they are achieved through the contexts of play and supported by caring, learning relationships with adults and peers and firmly establishes the child's right to a safe, stimulating, nurturing and play-based environment.

## SÍOLTA

Síolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. Its core elements comprise of three distinct but interrelated elements: Principles, Standards and Components of Quality. The 12 Principles provide the overall vision of the Framework, while the 16 Standards and 75 Components allow for the practical application of this vision across all aspects of our practice. The Components of Quality are further set out through a set of Signposts for Reflection and 'Think-about's' which support us in our daily practice.

### The 12 Principles are:

1. Early childhood is a significant and distinct time in life that must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported in its own right.
2. The child's individuality, strengths, rights and needs are central in the provision of quality early childhood experiences.
3. Parents are the primary educators of the child and have a pre-eminent role in promoting her/his well-being, learning and development.
4. Responsive, sensitive and reciprocal relationships, which are consistent over time, are essential to the well-being, learning and development of the young child.
5. Equality is an essential characteristic of quality early childhood care and education.
6. Quality early childhood settings acknowledge and respect diversity and ensure that all children and families have their individual, personal, cultural and linguistic identity validated.
7. The physical environment of the young child has a direct impact on her/his well-being, learning and development.
8. The safety, welfare and well-being of all children must be protected and promoted in all early childhood environments
9. The role of the adult in providing quality early childhood experiences is fundamental.
10. The provision of quality early childhood experiences requires cooperation, communication and mutual respect.
11. Pedagogy in early childhood is expressed by curricula or programmes of activities which take a holistic approach to the development and learning of the child and reflect the inseparable nature of care and education
12. Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child

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**There are 16 Standards which are:**

**Standard 1: Rights of the child**

Ensuring that each child's rights are met requires that she/he is enabled to exercise choice and to use initiative as an active participant and partner in her/his own development and learning.

**Standard 2: Environments**

Enriching environments, both indoor and outdoor (including materials and equipment) are well maintained, safe, available, accessible, adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and offer a variety of challenging and stimulating experiences.

**Standard 3: Parents and Families**

Valuing and involving parents and families requires a proactive partnership approach evidenced by a range of clearly stated, accessible and implemented processes, policies and procedures.

**Standard 4: Consultation**

Ensuring inclusive decision-making requires consultation that promotes participation and seeks out, listens to and acts upon the views and opinions of children, parents and staff, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

**Standard 5: Interactions**

Fostering constructive interactions (child/child, child/adult and adult/adult) requires explicit policies, procedures and practice that emphasise the value of process and are based on mutual respect, equal partnership and sensitivity.

**Standard 6: Play**

Promoting play requires that each child has ample time to engage in freely available and accessible, developmentally appropriate and well-resourced opportunities for exploration, creativity and 'meaning making' in the company of other children, with participating and supportive adults and alone, where appropriate.

**Standard 7: Curriculum**

Encouraging each child's holistic development and learning requires the implementation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme.

**Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation**

Enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the setting requires cycles of observation, planning, action and evaluation, undertaken on a regular basis.

**Standard 9: Health and Welfare**

Promoting the health and welfare of the child requires protection from harm, provision of nutritious food, appropriate opportunities for rest, and secure relationships characterised by trust and respect.

**Standard 10: Organisation**

Organising and managing resources effectively requires an agreed written philosophy, supported by clearly communicated policies and procedures to guide and determine practice.

**Standard 11: Professional Practice**

Practising in a professional manner requires that individuals have skills, knowledge, values and attitudes appropriate to their role and responsibility within the setting. In addition, it requires regular reflection upon practice and engagement in supported, ongoing professional development.

**Standard 12: Communication**

Communicating effectively in the best interests of the child requires policies, procedures and actions that promote the proactive sharing of knowledge and information among appropriate stakeholders, with respect and confidentiality.

**Standard 13: Transitions**

Ensuring continuity of experiences for children requires policies, procedures and practice that promote sensitive management of transitions, consistency in key relationships, liaison within and between settings, the keeping and transfer of relevant information (with parental consent), and the close involvement of parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.

**Standard 14: Identity and Belonging**

Promoting positive identities and a strong sense of belonging requires clearly defined policies, procedures and practice that empower every child and adult to develop a confident self- and group identity, and to have a positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others.

**Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation**

Being compliant requires that all relevant regulations and legislative requirements are met or exceeded.

**Standard 16: Community Involvement**

Promoting community involvement requires the establishment of networks and connections evidenced by policies, procedures and actions which extend and support all adult's and children's engagement with the wider community.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool received its first Síolta Award in 2017 and was awarded with it's second in 2022.

**CHILDREN**

## SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

**Statement**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we believe children are competent and confident learners. We believe that children should be supported to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions and behaviours. We acknowledge children are continually learning about their emotions, feelings and to manage same. Through positive and reciprocal relationships with our Early Years Educators, positive behaviour is encouraged from all children.

All children are treated with respect, by adults and other children alike to allow children to develop and sustain a positive sense of self. Children will feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

We recognise the importance of working with parents in supporting and promoting children's positive social emotional and behavioural wellbeing. We recognise the need to understand children's behaviour as a form of communication and we consider what might be triggering the behaviour and what the child is communicating. Children will be supported to learn how to express their feelings in appropriate ways and helped to learn how to deal positively with conflict.

The methods of dealing with challenging, unsafe or disruptive behaviour in this service will be only those that help children to develop self-regulation and are developmentally appropriate. When we work to promote positive behaviour with children, we are aware of the theory of child development. Only positive approaches to guidance are used, including logical or natural consequences applied in problem situations, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems and encouragement of appropriate behaviour.

Corporal punishment is prohibited as are any practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful. Children are never humiliated or segregated.

All staff interactions with children are aimed at promoting their well-being and development. This includes their social and emotional development. Adequate and appropriate stimulation is provided for each child and any inappropriate or challenging behaviour is dealt with sensitively and appropriately without threats or punishment. Our interactions policy supports this by encouraging warm nourishing relationships between children and educators that support and view children as strong, powerful, competent, complex and full of possibilities.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool are aware of and respect individual children's backgrounds and beliefs, it may sometimes be necessary to balance these with our knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and current best practice recommendations from recognised appropriate authorities in the best interests of the child.

### Principle

This policy is underpinned by the **Child Care Act 1991** (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

**Síolta Standard 5:** Interactions

**Standard 3:** Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians,

**Standard 9:** Nurture and Well-Being,

**Aistear:** The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

### Children's needs

Children need:

- This policy to ensure that early year's staff allow them the freedom and scope to learn through hands-on exploration and experimentation in a well-planned, well-resourced and well-ordered environment and to test the limits of their bodies to learn what they are capable of.
- To be able to do this within reasonable and appropriate limits for their own and others' safety and wellbeing.
- This policy to ensure that they receive the support, guidance and understanding that will help them to learn how to manage and regulate their own behaviour in ways that are appropriate for their age and level of understanding.
- To be supported to learn how to understand their feelings and learn how to express them in appropriate, acceptable and safe ways.
- They also need to learn how to manage conflict positively.
- Play activities are used to play out challenging situations so children get the opportunity to practice self-regulation strategies.
- Books and storytelling are used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated
- Children are encouraged to develop rules they think are important helping them take ownership of their behaviour

### Parents'/Families' needs

Parents/guardians need:

- To know that their child's needs will be appropriately met and their child's development will be supported in positive, supportive and constructive ways.
- To know that their child will be safe and happy.
- To know that they will be involved in decision-making about how their child's social, emotional and behaviour skills are being supported and developed and that the service will contact them, and work in partnership with them, in the event of any challenging or concerning behaviours being observed.
- Staff are aware of respectful communication in supporting a child in managing their behaviour.
- Where staff need to speak with a parent/guardian, the child will not be present.
- The parent/guardian is informed of incidents of behaviour in a mindful manner e.g., away from the door, not calling the parent into the room in front of other parents, away from children.
- Parents can request a meeting to discuss specific elements of the managing behaviour policy. The service, at the earliest convenience will facilitate this.

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- Ardfinnan Community Playschool maintains clear procedures on monitoring and recording any incidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.
- Information is only shared with parent/ guardians regarding strategies or plans in place to support their child. Information about other children is not shared.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concern regarding behaviours occurring. All issues, concerns or grievances are managed within our service.

### Staff needs

Staff members need:

- To have clear policy and procedural guidance on what the service's approach is to supporting children in their social, emotional and behavioural development.
- To be clear on what are and are not acceptable ways of responding to behaviours that they may find challenging.
- To know what is expected of them in relation to working in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure that children receive a consistent and shared approach to supporting them with developing their behaviour skills.
- Staff always comfort an upset child.
- Staff show empathy to the feelings which the child may be experiencing.
- A child's behaviour is not discussed outside the service.

### Management needs

Management needs:

- To ensure that parents are clearly informed about the service's approach to supporting their children's social, emotional and behavioural development.
- To know that the service's expectations with regard to how staff members work with the children and in partnership with their parents/guardians, are clearly outlined for all staff members to follow.
- To ensure that the regulatory requirement to have a policy on managing behaviour is adequately met.

### Educators will understand that there are many influences on a child's behaviour

– these include:

- Age and development
- General health and well-being
- Relationships with and within their family
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day
- Relationships with other children and others
- Factors, such as family, home life or peer group experiences.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that the role that families play, especially parents/guardians, is crucial to the success of the behaviour guidance approach. Parents/guardians will be provided with regular opportunities to contribute to the service's general approaches to promoting positive outcomes for children as well as the development and review of their own child's individual care and education plan.

### Curriculum & Environments

- Focuses on child led activities.

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- Children do not sit for long periods of time. Children are provided with choice to move from an activity which does not interest them.
- Play environments are laid out into specific play spaces which supports children's natural curiosity encouraging them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.
- Routines are flexible to meet the needs of the children.
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool keeps a minimum number of transitions throughout the day.
- The environment provides sufficient space, equipment and materials to meet the needs, abilities and interests of all children.
- Children have daily access to the outdoor environment.

## **CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES CHILDREN'S SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL WELLBEING**

### **The role of the Adult**

Adults who are loving, patient, and firm help children to learn that it makes sense to act in certain ways. Behaviour guidance based on trust, respect, love and consistency helps children to build self-esteem and self-discipline. Adults can help children to avoid inappropriate behaviour by helping them to understand rules and guidelines. When a child does something inappropriate, adults can help them look at the consequences of their actions and think about what they can do to make things better. Adults always need to consider whether a child may have some unmet need that is leading to the inappropriate behaviour or is experiencing some distress, and look at ways to address this in addition to helping the child with managing their behaviour.

### **Daily Interactions (please see Interactions policy)**

#### **Interactions with children**

**Ethos:** To encourage warm nourishing relationships between children and educators that support and view children as strong, powerful, competent, complex and full of possibilities

All staff will interact frequently with all children in a calm, friendly, positive, respectful manner. They are available and responsive to all children. Each child is treated with respect and consideration. Independence is encouraged and scaffolded as children are ready. All achievements, efforts and feelings are acknowledged and given sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-regulation.

Children are encouraged to verbalise their feelings ideas and interests. Educators will plan activities and tell stories to help children learn about right and wrong. Children are distracted from unwanted behaviour. When behaviour is unacceptable educators will explain to the child/children why it is unacceptable in a way they can understand.

#### **Aistear**

Using strategies recommended in Aistear we:

- maintain a positive and safe learning environment
- work with children to draw up "rules" for the playroom and the garden
- support children in building resilience and in coping when things go wrong and when they are upset
- use conflicts and awkward moments to discuss feelings
- work with children to solve problems and conflicts
- mediate, when necessary, in a firm and fair way to support children when they are feeling hurt

### **1. Positive reinforcement and encouragement**

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- Positive behaviour, however small, is encouraged and affirmed with both words and body language (e.g. nods, smiles).
- When a child is behaving well and when they are trying to stop themselves engaging in negative activities, this is noticed and acknowledged. This builds self-confidence and encourages children to repeat positive behaviour.
- Negative behaviour is ignored when it is judged safe and appropriate to do so.
- Children are encouraged in their activities.
- Encouragement is demonstrated by adults participating with children in their activities, at the children's invitation, taking care not to 'take over'.

Educators will recognise that some of the ways children tell us they are stressed or overwhelmed are when they show the following behaviours on a regular basis.

- Are overactive
- Have difficulty focusing on or completing a task
- Become easily frustrated
- Have difficulty making decisions
- Have difficulty following directions
- Solve problems by hitting, biting, grabbing or pushing
- Have tantrums
- Cling to adults
- Avoid new tasks
- Do not play with other children
- Cry frequently and cannot be soothed easily
- Do not eat

Educators respond in a supportive calm manner to all children in distress.

### 1. Resolving an Incident/Conflict Management

This type of behaviour may be a once off incident or it may be specific times where a child needs support based on their age, stage of development or needs

Ardfinnan Community Playschool supports the development of self-regulation through the *Conflict Resolution Approach*

#### Guidance for conflict management and resolving an incident

Below are steps to follow using the Conflict Resolution Approach

- **Approach Calmly** – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
- **Acknowledge Feelings** – describe how the child/children are feeling, children often don't have the language to explain how they feel, leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them *"you both look very sad and upset"*
- **Gather Information** – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations
- **Restate the Problem** – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/all can understand both sides of the story *"So you both want to play with the train at the same time"*

- **Ask for Ideas for Solutions & Choose one Together (or for younger children give a solution)** – give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but it's giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need. *"What can we do to solve this problem"*
- **Be Prepared to Give Follow Up Support** – it is important that staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.
- **Explain the reasons** behind why something cannot happen or why some behaviour is inappropriate. *"We use our words in playschool not our hands"*

### Communication with Parents

These behaviours may or may not immediately be shared with parents as it may be linked to the age of the child or stage of development. It is the role of the adult to support the child in developing these problem-solving skills

### 2. Managing Moderate Behaviour Issues

This type of behaviour can be recognised when a behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence. Incidents of reoccurring behaviour are documented by Ardfinnan Community Playschool. This type of information which is recorded may include location, time, date, triggers, witness. It is stored within the child's file in a locked cabinet.

- Guidance for conflict management and resolving an incident is used following the steps in the Conflict Resolution Approach

### Communications with staff

- Our educators will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place, to help the child manage his/her behaviour. It is recommended that the plan have a start and end date for review.
- Educators will observe the child to identify any triggers of behaviour, the observations will run between the dates of the plan
- When behaviour happens the steps above can be implemented
- Where observations are carried out the child should not feel isolated. It is important at this stage educators involved are clear on the purpose of the observation and behaviours being observed.
- In respecting the dignity and rights of the child, where observations are carried out, information is only shared with relevant people
- The well-being of the staff is paramount and the service may put varied supports in place where needed
- Following the observations staff are supported to reflect on triggers for the behaviour. Additional strategies may be suggested at this stage e.g. staggered transitions, one-to-one support, visual routine, increasing adult: child ratio, physical layout is arranged so that there is a high level of visibility

### Communication with Parents

Reassurance should be provided to parents on supporting their child and open communication should be encouraged throughout this process

In setting up a meeting with a parent or guardian, Ardfinnan Community Playschool will consider the following:

- Where possible a suitable time/day is prearranged with the parent and service
- Possible supports the parent might need for the meeting e.g., family member
- Meetings are in a comfortable uninterrupted space
- All conversations are away from the child
- Consistent staff attend the meeting e.g. room leader and manager
- All meetings plans and observations are recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet

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Before observations are carried out Ardfinnan Community Playschool will consider the following:

- A meeting may be set up with parents/guardians, the lead educator or manager may speak with parent about the reoccurring behaviour
- A plan may be developed between staff and parents to support the child, this plan is short term 1 to 2 weeks approximately. The strategies and timeframe are clear and the plan is reviewed regularly
- The manager/lead educator encourage questions and discussion with parents
- Where possible the date of a follow up meeting is arranged

After carrying out observations:

- All educators may request to speak with the child's parents
- During the meeting the plan, triggers may be discussed with the parent
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to the plan
- Educators encourage questions and discussion with parents
- Where the service has decided to continue observing the child, a further plan may be put in place in collaboration with parents
- A date is set for the next meeting

### **Behavioural Management**

- When a child becomes so angry anxious or frustrated to the extend that they themselves and others around them have become unsettled, staff will remain calm and settle the situation for the child and others around them
- Staff will stop a child's aggressive or destructive behaviour such as biting kicking or hitting and give a reason for their actions e.g., biting hurts, please don't bite
- Staff model positive behaviour and will never mirror the child's behaviour by raising the tone of voice or acting inappropriately
- When the situation has been diffused it is important that staff offer support time and further discussion with the child, to reflect on what happened and to plan an alternative coping strategy in case a similar issue arises
- A positive approach that the child may use in the future is reinforced such as walking away and playing elsewhere or by stating clearly that they don't like what is happening or it hurts.

### **3. Serious Behaviour Issues**

Serious behaviour issues may include the following:

- Repeated pattern of behaviour which impacts the child's learning or engagement
- Prolonged tantrums physical and verbal aggression disruptive behaviour (e.g., screaming, property destruction, self-injury)

### **Strategies**

Specific strategies may be followed to support the child including Conflict Resolution Approach

Ardfinnan Community Playschool may develop an individual care plan to support the child

Where other strategies are in place to support the child there is a clear outline provided in the care plan. These strategies follow best practice guidelines

Services may also use the following to support serious behaviour issues:

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- **Time to one side with support of an adult** -- In rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult, for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. Adult support is needed throughout this time, and a child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support. Clear guidelines are followed by the Educators. This should not be used as a form of time out and/or isolating a child.
- **Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm** -- The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property. Physical holding as prevention must only be used:
  - To prevent injury to the child or other children
  - To prevent an accident

**Regardless of age, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time.**

In some cases, an individual care plan is developed from external agencies who are supporting the child. Ardfinnan Community Playschool, in so far as practical, will implement this care plan in collaboration with parents/ guardians.

### Communication

- The staff team may carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan to support the child.
- Observations may be carried out at different times of the day to establish triggers of the behaviour. All observations are discussed with the parent/ guardian.
- A plan may be developed in collaboration with the staff team and family of the child.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
- If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed are stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
- All meetings, plans and observations are recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.
- The staff always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.
- When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing the difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.

***All forms of physical punishment are prohibited at Ardfinnan Community Playschool, our staff will never use physical punishment to deal with behaviour issues.***

### Supporting Staff

- Staff are given a copy of the behaviour management and emotional support policy as part of their induction in Ardfinnan Community Playschool. Staff receive training at induction on the behaviour management techniques that are used.
- Staff are supported with behaviour management and emotional support of children in their care through ongoing training, support and supervision
- This policy is reviewed on a yearly basis with the input of staff.
- Staff share information as needed, in a confidential manner, to ensure consistency across the service when supporting children's behaviour.
- Staff are aware of the language that they use when speaking to children. Staff focus on positive commands when encouraging children to modify their behaviour. Using 'do' instead of 'don't', for example.

## Anti-bullying

Children are afforded a right to their own time and space. Depending on the child's age and stage of development, it may not be appropriate to expect children to share. However, we feel it is important to acknowledge both children's feelings, and to support them in understanding how the other child may be feeling.

Diversity and equality are important for children to understand, and we endeavour to create a positive and supportive environment for all children. Educators will encourage all children to acknowledge and celebrate difference. Consequently, children will recognise from an early age, bullying, fighting, hurting and racial comments are not acceptable behaviour.

Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. Any form of bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool Educators follow the guidelines below to ensure children do not experience bullying.

- Educators ensure all children feel safe, happy and secure within the setting.
- Educators develop positive relationships with all children, and encourage children to speak about their feelings.
- Educators are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is a part of children's development, and recognise positive opportunities should be in place for children to channel this positively.
- Children are learning about their feelings, Educators will support children in identifying their feelings and actions for example happy, sad, angry.
- At an age and stage appropriate level, children will be encouraged to resolve their problems and take responsibility for their actions.
- Educators are aware when play becomes 'aggressive', and will initiate an appropriate activity with the children.
- Any instance of bullying will be discussed fully with the parents of all involved to look for a consistent resolution to the behaviour.
- If parents/ Guardian have a concern regarding their child's behaviour, the lead educator/manager will be available to speak to the parent. It is through partnership with Parents/ Guardians which we can ensure a child will feel confident and secure in their environment, at home and in the setting.

**BULLYING AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS NOT TOLERATED WITHIN THE SERVICE, WHETHER INFLICTED ON ADULTS OR CHILDREN.**

## Biting

Biting happens in almost all childcare settings where young children are together and dealing with biting can be challenging. Biting is a developmental stage which children may go through. All biting incidents are upsetting for children, and will be dealt with in a calm and clear manner. Educators will use clear language and be consistent in their approach. We aim to support children in developing self-control; however, the safety of each child is our primary concern.

### Why do children bite?

- Children may be teething, and it may feel good to bite and chew.
- Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult to express, and at times control.

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- Biting sometimes occurs for no apparent reason.

### **Biting Prevention**

- The correct child: adult ratios will be in place within the setting at all times.
- The layout of the room will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child, and Educators can see all children at all times from all areas of the room.
- Age and stage appropriate materials are present within the room for children to access at all times.
- Educators are vigilant to the relationships between children, and are aware of possible conflicts.
- Educators are aware of the temperaments of the children.
- Educators should encourage children to use language to express feelings/emotions.

### **Where a child does bite, Educators should follow these guidelines and try to distinguish a pattern**

- Are there particular times of the day which the child bites?
- Do toys seem to be causing biting incidents?
- Does the child focus on one particular child?

**Procedures to follow when biting occurs:** - Usually, the skin isn't broken and the wound isn't serious. However, the appropriate first aid should be administered.

If the skin is not broken:

- Wash the area with mild soap and water (do not rub) and pat dry.

If the skin is broken:

- The human mouth is full of bacteria, and there may be a risk of infection. Serious bites to the face, hands, or genitals can be especially dangerous.
- Wash the area — but don't scrub — with mild soap and running water for three to five minutes, then cover it with a clean dressing.
- If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean dressing and elevate the area if possible.
- If the skin is broken, the child may need to be seen by a doctor, who will clean and examine the wound. Unless the bite is very serious or on your child's face, the doctor will probably prefer not to give your child stitches. Stitching the bite closed can increase the risk of infection. The doctor may prescribe a short course of antibiotics to prevent infection, depending on the location and severity of the bite.
- The child is comforted, and reassured of their safety.
- The Educators will explain to the child who has bitten using a firm but gentle approach that biting is not allowed.
- All staff will be informed and details should be recorded in the accident and incident report form.
- The situation is dealt with professionally, and confidentiality is adhered to. Both parents are informed separately, and the accident and incident report is signed.
- The Educators should explain the methods which will be adhered to so it does not occur again, and highlight the importance of partnership with parents.
- If the child bites again, the child should be observed for a period of time to try and develop a pattern of behaviour.

- In the event of a child repeatedly biting, the manager will speak to the parents/ guardian. If all avenues have been exhausted, Educators may suggest seeking help/support outside the setting.

*Forms used in line with the Behaviour Policy: Accident and Incident form*

## CHILDREN

# INTERACTIONS POLICY

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all interactions between children and staff, staff and parents, and staff and visitors are positive, where parents can share in the education of their child in an open and friendly environment, where health, safety, welfare, needs and rights of all children in our care is one of the utmost importance, where all staff are valued for their contribution to our playschool.

### **Interactions with children**

**Ethos:** To encourage warm nourishing relationships between children and educators that support and view children as strong, powerful, competent, complex and full of possibilities

### **Implementation**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we are very proud of the way in which our staff interact with the children. We believe that any interaction between a child and staff member can have a profound effect on a child's self-esteem and overall development. We are privileged to be part of each child's life and with this in mind we aim to care and educate each child through positive interactions which are caring, respectful and friendly.

- Children are encouraged to express themselves and their opinions
- They are given the opportunity to become self-reliant and to develop self-esteem
- Children are given guidance as to positive and responsible behaviour
- Each child will have their dignity and rights maintained at all times,
- No child is isolated for any reason other than illness
- Each child and their family's values acknowledged and respected
- Children are supported in their learning experiences
- Emotional support is offered to each child as they begin to recognise and deal with their feelings
- Educators will be responsive to each child's strengths, interests and abilities
- Educators will encourage language development by listening to the children and patiently answering their many questions
- Educators will model appropriate behaviour and plan activities that help children learn about right and wrong
- Educators will speak to the children in a calm, friendly, positive, respectful manner, getting down to the child's level and using eye contact or face to face contact.
- When behaviour is unacceptable educators will explain why simply to the child or children
- Educators will use positive worded directions not just "no" or "don't"

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At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we hope our interactions with children will encourage children to play together, to share experiences together, to help and talk to each other solving problems which may arise and to have fun together. We endeavour to encourage each child to feel safe in communicating their needs, interests, wants and ideas, to develop a positive relationship of trust and to explore our playschool.

Staff will give attention to:

- Allow children adequate time to respond to questions or requests
- Let children know in advance when the daily schedule will change
- Allow children to make their own decisions
- Allow children to make mistakes
- Give children many opportunities to solve problems without pressure
- Be responsive and alert to signs of stress in each child's behaviour and respond with appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques
- Continuously facilitate the development of self-esteem by respecting and accepting children, regardless of their behaviour
- Join the children while they eat and ensure that meal times are occasions for social interaction and learning about texture, taste and colour

#### **Interactions with families**

- Our day begins each session by warmly welcoming each child and their family member/members to our playschool.
- All new members are welcomed and support offered/given where needed.
- Each family's values are respected and guidance provided to children in developing positive attitudes to the different backgrounds and abilities of others.
- We ensure that parents/guardian's privacy is respected and confidentiality is maintained by providing them with a private space to discuss private matters.

Parents are encouraged through our Parent/Guardian involvement policy to get involved with our playschool either on our committee or as a volunteer for our walks or both.

#### **Interactions with colleagues**

Positive interactions between staff are essential in creating an environment and atmosphere where children feel emotionally safe, secure and happy.

Staff who are sensitive, respectful, courteous and patient with each other will create an atmosphere that is relaxed and happy.

All staff members are expected to use calm and friendly voices and to support each other in their work.

Team work is an integral part of our playschool, good team work allows staff to empathise and support their colleagues

## **CHILDREN**

# **HEALTHY EATING AND NUTRITION**

### **Statement**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we believe that eating a balanced diet is vital for good health and wellbeing. Food provides the energy, protein, essential fats, vitamins and minerals to live, grow and function properly. We

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understand that children need a wide variety of different foods to provide the right amounts of nutrients for good health and development. The food a child eats in their early years influences their eating habits as they grow and develop. We recognise that it is important to teach young children about healthy food choices and staying well hydrated, and to help them develop good habits and a healthy relationship with food from an early age.

#### **Principle**

This Healthy Eating Policy is developed in line with the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services (the Department of Health are developing healthy eating guidelines for 1–5-year-olds), Healthy Ireland, Regulation 10 and Regulation 22 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

### **Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises the needs of Children, Parents, Staff and Management when writing this policy**

#### **Children need:**

- Their educators to understand the importance of healthy nutrition.
- This policy to recognise that food has always been a central part of community, social, cultural and religious life.
- This policy to recognise in its practice guidance that, in addition to satisfying physical and social needs, food and the way it is experienced may also satisfy certain emotional needs (not to be used as a reward for behaviour, but enjoyed as part of a positive social experience). These emotional needs include a sense of security, love and acceptance.
- The interactions relating to eating and drinking to always be positive.
- The effect of poor nutrition on learning to be considered.
- This policy to ensure that all aspects of healthy eating are considered and their dietary requirements are appropriately met as well as any particular religious requirements their family may have.
- Children with allergies and very young children also need this policy to help ensure that they are not put at risk of allergic reactions to food or drink or of choking.

#### **Parents and guardians need:**

- This policy to clearly outline the service's approach to healthy eating
- To know what foods and drinks are to be included by them in their child's lunch box, how they are provided and what foods or drinks should not be included.
- To be aware of the service's positive approach to interactions with the children relating to eating and drinking.
- To know what the service's specific approach is to ensuring that no child will be given access to a food to which they have a known allergy and that no child will be at risk of choking on any foods.

#### **All staff members need:**

- This policy to provide clear information on what the service's approach is to providing healthy, safe and nutritious food for the children.
- This policy to provide the correct information for them to give to parents/guardians about what types of foods they encourage parents/guardians to provide for their child in snack or lunch boxes.
- The policy to include guidance on how to ensure that food provided in the service is safe for the children.
- Clarity on what kinds of interactions with the children are expected of them around and during meal times.

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- To know how to access the quality guidelines relating to food and nutrition that are associated with the policy, and how these guidelines are to be implemented in the service.

#### **Management needs:**

- This policy to ensure that the service meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 in relation to Food and Drink (Regulation 22) and the provision of a Healthy Eating Policy (Regulation 10).
- To ensure through this policy that all staff members and all parents/guardians of children attending the service are clear on the service's approach to healthy eating and positive interactions relating to eating and drinking.
- All staff members and parents/guardians/carers to clearly understand their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to all children attending the service being provided appropriately with healthy, safe and nutritious foods that meet their particular needs and religious requirements.

#### **Curriculum**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognise the importance of food in our daily routine, healthy food is a key part of our curriculum, where the children are offered learning on the food pyramid and how to choose a healthy choice for a snack, fruit and vegetables are available to explore and taste during this learning. Our garden is also a key learning experience for the children where we may grow vegetables or herbs or fruit.

As part of our learning we engage with Healthy Ireland Smart Start programme, which focuses on health promotion, emotional wellbeing, physical activity, nutrition and oral health.

#### **Procedure**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that we may not all be hungry at the same time, with this in mind lunch times vary from day to day depending on the needs of the children.

Following discussions with parents Ardfinnan Community Playschool recommend that only Water and Milk be consumed in playschool. We also recommend that the children have access to their drinks bottle throughout the day as water is a vital necessity for healthy life

#### **Lunch time:**

- Educators will sit with the children during lunch times to encourage conversation and extend interactions
- Children are encouraged to get their own lunch box, and drink and tidy up afterwards
- Encouraging children to make choices, drink and feed themselves and look after their own lunches during meal times will help to develop each child's independence
- Meal times are an important social aspect of the daily routine within our playschool. They provide opportunities to inform and educate children about nutrition and healthy eating.
- Parents will be encouraged to promote healthy eating by providing healthy snacks for their children
- Suggestions of healthy snacks will be made available for parents at the start of the pre-school year
- Fizzy drinks, sugary snacks or crisps will not be allowed in the pre-school
- Snacks such as fruit, yoghurt, sandwiches will be encouraged as healthy alternatives for children.
- All special dietary requirements will be respected inclusive of dietary needs and cultural dietary habits.
- Staff are encouraged to lead by example

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## Síolta and Aistear

Ardfinnan Community Playschool refers to Síolta and Aistear when discussing a healthy eating and nutrition policy, *Síolta Standard 9 Component 9.4 states that a quality service is proactive in supporting the development of healthy eating habits in children while supporting their enjoyment and appreciation of eating and drinking as a positive social experience*

Aistear states that *adults support children's psychological and physical well-being by helping them to make healthy choices about nutrition, hygiene and exercise (this also applies to hydration). One of Aistear's learning goals for young children is to "make healthy choices and demonstrate positive attitudes to nutrition, hygiene, exercise, and routine".*

## Storage of Children's Lunches

- All lunch boxes, bags to be clearly labelled with your child's name prior to coming to playschool
- All water bottles to be labelled clearly with your child's name prior to coming to playschool
- All lunch boxes drinks bottles are stored in your child's school bag and placed on their peg in the hall way, the children have free access throughout the day to their school bags

## Recommendations for your child's lunch

Drinks:

- Water is the best thirst quencher.
- Milk is an important part of a growing child's diet.
- Milk and water are the most tooth-friendly drinks

Snacks:

- Fresh fruit pieces (apple, banana, kiwi orange, plum, pear, pineapple, strawberries, blueberries, tomato) we recommend that **all grapes are cut in quarters** to reduce the risk of choking.
- Fresh vegetable pieces (cucumber, carrot, celery, salad leaves)
- Cheese slices/cubes and crackers, cheese strings
- Fingers of toast, sandwiches, wraps, pitta bread, scone
- Sliced rolls of cooked ham, tuna, chicken.
- Raisins or other dried fruit
- plain yoghurt
- pasta
- hard-boiled egg
- nuts (pine nuts, peanuts)

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has adopted this policy recognising that healthy eating is a key part of learning in preschool; it is a valuable life skill as we believe that learning about how to eat healthy, drink healthy, getting exercise at a young age and being able to take responsibility for making good health choices and caring for themselves enables children to experience wellbeing and lays the foundation for a healthy lifestyle in the future. This is accomplished with the help of parents and guardians, staff and management.

**CHILDREN**

# HAND HYGIENE

**Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool aims to keep children happy and healthy by supporting the children to understand the importance of hand washing. This policy is underpinned by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2016. Good hand hygiene is the most effective way of preventing transmission of Infection, and staff will support children in using the proper technique for hand washing.

**Procedure**

- Hand washing facilities are available the playroom toilets, staff toilet, food preparation areas and cleaning areas.
- Children can avail of the hand washing facilities when they need it, and they will be encouraged and supported to practice this new skill.
- Wash hand basins have hot and cold taps, hot taps are thermostatically controlled to ensure that hot water is a suitable temperature for children so as to avoid scalding and facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Staff encourages children to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating any food, messy play and after playing outside.
- Guidelines on hand washing are displayed in the playroom and toilets. These guidelines incorporate visual images that are appropriate for staff and children.

**Hygiene Procedures**

All new staff and students are informed of the hygiene procedures as part of their induction programme.

- The start of the work shifts all staff will wash their hands
- Hand washing – after using the toilet, after outdoor play, before and after handling food.
- Cuts and sores must be covered with suitable dressings
- Handling or dealing with waste or rubbish
- The removal of disposable gloves and/or aprons
- Coughing or sneezing;
- After applying sunscreen;
- Any other time where staff feel it is necessary to wash hands

**Dealing with spills**

- Disposable gloves must always be used when cleaning up spills of body fluids
- Disposable towels must always be used when cleaning up spills of body fluids
- A supply of clean clothing is readily available for accidents
- The area of the accident is treated with suitable disinfectant

**Cleaning procedures**

- All toilets, surrounding walls, hold rails, door handles and sinks are cleaned and disinfected at the end of every day

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- Floors, tables and equipment, are cleaned, disinfected and checked for breakage at the end of every day or when necessary
- Sand is covered when not in use
- Water tray and play sinks empty and clean when not in use
- All left over food is disposed of properly

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a detailed cleaning policy.

## CHILDREN

# OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

### Policy Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises the importance of outdoor play and experience for all children. The outdoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to following good practice in relation to ensuring ratios are maintained when outside the service and all staff members are aware of which ratios will be maintained.

### Principle:

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

### Rationale

A new requirement under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 stipulates that all services shall ensure that—

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

(b) where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

The regulations also outline that where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises, services must ensure that the outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

In Ardfinnan Community Playschool a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of children's play as a critical factor in children's wellbeing, learning and development. We believe that outdoor play has much to offer children therefore we see it as an essential part of the curriculum every day. Outdoor play activities are a vital part of childhood experience and an important complement to our indoor activities. We consider that outdoor play is just as important as the indoor programme.

The outdoor environment is an invaluable place of learning and engagement and has a positive impact on children's physical and mental wellbeing. It provides opportunities for children to explore discover and develop an understanding of the natural environment around them with unique opportunities for: sensory experiences, physical activities, observations, constructive play with sand, water and mud, socio-dramatic play, art, science, mathematics, environmental learning and many others. Therefore, the outdoor play environment at Ardfinnan Community Playschool is planned with the same care and attention as the indoor environment

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### **Ardfinnan Community Playschool**

- recognises the importance of outdoor play and experiences for all children and provides access to outdoor play each day weather permitting.
- believes that outdoors is one of the best learning environments for young children. Our outdoor environment is accessed daily and offers diverse, creative, challenging, and enriching experiences for our children.
- offers seamless provision where the children can choose to spend their time either indoors or outdoors. Our outdoor environment offers diverse, creative, challenging, and enriching experiences for our children with lots of opportunity for play, movement, and sensory stimulation.
- plans outdoor experiences having observed the children and their interests, linking experiences with Aistear and Síolta providing open ended materials as a stimulus for creative, imaginative play
- will liaise with parents discussing any concerns they may have such as outside play in winter, having a change of clothes or overalls for use in our mud garden.

### **Aim:**

We aim to provide a safe, stimulating outdoor environment where space is used effectively to enable children to explore a broad and balanced curriculum using a range of interesting and engaging resources suitable to both their individual and group needs.

### **The outdoor space is designed to provide:**

- Varied multisensory, challenging, creative and enriching experiences.
- Opportunities for noisy, boisterous, vigorous, physically active play.
- Opportunities for appropriate physical challenge and risk-taking that are inherent in the value of play.
- Different surfaces and opportunities for the development of physical strength, balance and coordination.
- Natural elements and loose materials that children can combine, manipulate, use and adapt in their own way, for their own purposes.
- Opportunities to develop language and social skills
- Opportunities for exploration, observation and experimentation

### **Weather**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool believes outdoor play is a natural enhancement and extension of indoor environments and children should ideally be able to choose to play outside at any time. Parents are asked to give their children the appropriate clothing, hats, gloves and coats for cold weather, sun cream, sunhats and tee-shirts which cover the shoulders for the summer. Children are given the choice to go outside in snow, frost, rain, wind and sunshine to experience all types of weather and its effect on our environment.

### **Planning for learning**

The outdoor play area is included in all planning for learning. It is important to ensure that:

- Children are enabled to access the outdoors on a daily basis taking appropriate measures to deal with the weather conditions.
- The outdoor play area is used as a context and a natural resource for learning and development.
- Children are consulted about their interests, needs and wishes for outdoor play and the outdoor environment.
- Children are given the opportunity to plan and have ownership of their learning in the outdoors.

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- The particular strengths and needs of each child are considered.
- A wide variety of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences are planned for to ensure that children's learning and development needs are met under all four themes of Aistear:
  - Wellbeing
  - Identity and Belonging
  - Communicating
  - Exploring and Thinking
- The opportunities for appropriate challenge and risk-taking in play are considered in planning.
- The learning that happens in the outdoor play area is observed, assessed and recorded in the same way as learning indoors.

### **Play opportunities**

The outdoor play area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity.

- Children experience social interactions – being able to choose whether and when to play alone or with others, to negotiate, co-operate, compete and resolve conflicts.
- Long, uninterrupted periods of time are provided for spontaneous free play.
- A variety of materials is provided to stimulate different kinds of play including:
  - ◆ sand, mud, water, clay, paint, and other open-ended materials for sensory and exploratory play
  - ◆ a large supply of blocks and construction toys and materials for cognitive and physical development
  - ◆ balls, balancing and climbing places
  - ◆ materials for building dens, making concoctions, using tools
  - ◆ small world play
  - ◆ art, writing, modelling and other creative activities
  - ◆ natural materials for matching, sequencing, measuring, weighing, pouring for learning maths concepts.
- Open space is available for running, cycling and general free movement.
- Children are encouraged to manipulate the environment and the materials in their own way, to support their play.
- Activities which test the limits of capabilities such as lifting, balancing and climbing and chase games are included.
- All children, including those with physical impairments/disabilities, have access to play opportunities and are included in play – for children with limited motor abilities and/or health impairments this means that activities may need to be positioned to allow children to relax, to focus attention on the activity and have sufficient controlled movement for independent play.
- The value of messy play, rough-and-tumble play, and nonsense play is recognised.
- Children can enjoy energetic activity and have opportunities to run, jump, scoot, crawl, climb, swing and ride on wheeled toys.
- The outdoors offers the children opportunities for manipulative play and to develop their fine motor skills.

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- Children are helped to care for the outdoor environment through the context of their outdoor play area.
- Children are given opportunities to care for living things (gardening with non-toxic plants).
- Children learn how to use tools safely and effectively and to follow safety rules.

### Play values

- Play is valued both for its own sake and as a critical factor in children's wellbeing, learning and development.
- All children have the right to engage in play experiences.
- Children are capable and active learners.
- Children learn through active hands-on experience – playing, exploring, experimenting and discovering.
- Children are enabled to develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world.
- Children can play for their own purposes.
- Children are played with on their terms.
- Children are allowed to manage and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoor play area.
- Children are given the opportunity to relax, enjoy and have fun outdoors.
- Both boys and girls can be competent in all areas.

### Supervision

- All staff members must be vigilant in their supervision of the children.
- Appropriate staff ratios must be maintained in the play area at all times.
- It must be ensured that an adult directly supervises the use of each large play structure.
- Staff members should place themselves strategically around the play area so that all children can be observed and heard and reached quickly, especially when engaging in activities that have a level of challenge/risk, for example:
  - In all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, water tables
  - When children are building and/or climbing high structures
  - When children are using sharp items, such as sticks or tools.

### Safety

Safety is a primary consideration in planning all activities. Appropriate supervision of children while playing outside is paramount. We aim to ensure that the risk of injury is minimised while allowing children appropriate challenges. This is important for their learning and development. Children are given the chance to stretch themselves, and to test and develop their abilities, without exposing them to unacceptable hazards

A risk assessment is taken prior to going out by a member of staff, ensuring that the outdoor area is free of harm for the children e.g., animal fowling's, damaged play equipment, etc.

### Safety procedures

- All staff members must be diligent in the inspection of the play areas.
- All equipment must be maintained to ensure the children's safety.
- New equipment must be installed to the most up to date Safety Standards. Where equipment is installed that has a recommendation for a shock absorbing surface this must be rated and installed as recommended by the manufacturer.

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- Visual inspections of the playground and equipment must be carried out on a daily basis before the children go outside to ensure safety is maintained.
- A monthly and seasonal inspection of the playground and equipment must be carried out to determine the need for repairs.
- The use of wheeled toys must be carefully monitored.
- Emergency/first aid kits must be easily accessible.
- It must be ensured that all of the children are clear about the safety rules.

### **Playground and equipment maintenance procedures**

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the route the children take from the indoor to the outdoor area is free of hazards – this must be checked daily.
- Ensuring that the play area boundary (fence and gate) is secure, that no adult can access the area without the knowledge of the staff members in charge and no child can leave the area without supervision.
- Ensuring that children cannot access the bins, oil tank/gas supply, boiler or pest control bait boxes.
- Checking the area for hazards such as sharp points, protruding nails, nuts, rivets or such like
- Checking daily for broken glass, plastic, animal droppings.
- Checking for choking hazards where children under three are present.
- Sweeping hard play surfaces clean of stones, sand and gravel.
- Checking sand for contamination. Ensuring the sand is cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Always remove cords, string or skipping ropes tied to slides, or other playground equipment.
- Ensuring climbing equipment is not placed near clothes lines or overhead wire.
- Restrict the use of climbing structures if they cannot be kept dry.
- Check structures for frost and/or ice build-up.
- Though the presence of ice provides a learning opportunity, ice poses an extreme fall risk. Ice underfoot must be broken, sanded or salted where appropriate before children are allowed to play in the area.
- Conducting daily checks on equipment. Watching for signs of decay, rust, splinters, sharp protrusions, protruding nuts, rivets or nails.
- Taking whatever action is necessary to ensure children's safety such as removing broken equipment or erecting temporary barriers. Recording any problems that require specific maintenance or repair skills that staff members cannot provide and/or removal of equipment and bring them to the attention of the manager.
- Checking for any toxic plants, these can sometimes be present through self-seeding from neighbouring property.

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### **CHILD WELFARE**

## **CHILDREN'S WELFARE**

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# CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

## ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL

Ladies Abbey, Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary E91RP21

Phone: 052 7464488 Mobile: 086 1762095

Email: [ardfinnanchildcare@gmail.com](mailto:ardfinnanchildcare@gmail.com) & [ardfinnanplayschool@gmail.com](mailto:ardfinnanplayschool@gmail.com)

Website: [ardfinnancommunityplayschool.com](http://ardfinnancommunityplayschool.com)

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is a registered pre-school providing an Early Years' Service, offering ECCE, NCS, and CCSP to children aged between 2 years and 6 months to 5 years. It is a sessional service operating 38 weeks of the year.

**Room Leader:** Erica Condon, **Administrator:** Elaine Cowan

**Early Years Educators:** Erica Condon, Jenn Baker

**AIM Support Worker:** Elaine Cowan

**Staff:** Edel Meaney

### Ardfinnan Community Playschool commitment to safeguard children from harm

Ardfinnan Community Playschool believes that the best interests of children attending our services are paramount. We believe that all children attending our service have the right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration in all decisions affecting them.

- Committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to provide a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop
- Believes that the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount.
- Acknowledges the rights and welfare of all children to be protected, that all children are treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.
- Our guiding principles are underpinned by **Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and current legislation such as the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012.**
- Our policy declaration applies to all staff, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration and our child safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures.
- As with all our policies and procedures we will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every 2 years or sooner, if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
- Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection

<b>Designated Liaison Person:</b>  Erica Condon	<b>Deputy Designated Liaison Person:</b>  Breda Murphy
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*Ardfinnan Community Playschool is operated by Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee. The object for which the company is established are: Provision of high quality, affordable and accessible community based childcare facility, enabling parent's avail of education training and employment opportunities and all related activities.*

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**CHILDSAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

<p><b>Name of service and service provided</b></p>	<p>Ardfinnan Community Playschool                  Sessional Preschool service                  ECCE &amp; NCS are provided along with fee paying service.</p>		
<p><b>2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm</b> (brief outline of what our service is, what we do and our commitment to safeguard children):</p>	<p>Ardfinnan Community Playschool.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is committed to protecting and promoting the welfare and safety of all children who attend the Service.</li> <li>• Practice recommendations made by the Department of Health and Children publication “<b>Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2015</b>” and acknowledges the rights, welfare and safety of all children to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.</li> <li>• Have developed policies and procedures which childcare staff must follow regarding the identification of and response to all child protection issues</li> <li>• Has a statutory obligation to report concerns of harm under the <b>Children First Act 2015</b> directly to Tusla.</li> <li>• Will carry out an assessment of risk of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services and manage such risk</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Risk assessment</b>                  We continue to carry out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Across is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Policy and Procedures</li> <li>2. A designated Liaison Officer/Officers</li> <li>3. Safe Recruitment and Garda Vetting for all staff and committee members</li> <li>4. Management of staff</li> </ol>	<p>Committed to developing policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks</p> <p>Erica Condon and Breda Murphy are our Designated Liaison Officers</p> <p>The welfare of the child is paramount when recruiting staff members. All are Garda vetted and references checked</p> <p>Adult child ratio strictly adhered to,</p>
<p><b>Procedures</b></p>	<p>Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with the requirements stated under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse including misconduct against staff</li> <li>• Procedures of safe recruitment and Garda vetting of all staff</li> <li>• Provision of training in Children First for all staff</li> <li>• Mandatory reporting of concerns of harm and access to reporting forms for all staff</li> <li>• Designated Liaison person/ persons know to all staff</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p>Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement. We believe that the welfare of the child is paramount. We create a safe environment where each child is valued, respected and encouraged.</p> <p>Designated Liaison Person: <b>Erica Condon</b>                  Designated Liaison Person: <b>Breda Murphy</b></p>		

## ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of all children who attend the Service. The service uses recommendations made by the Department of Health and Children publication "Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017" and acknowledges the rights and welfare of all children to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration. Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a statutory obligation to report concerns of harm under the Children First Act, 2015 directly to Tusla.

Ardfinnan community Playschool believe that the welfare of the child is paramount we create a safe environment where each child is valued, respected and encouraged. We ensure that this is adhered to by staff through the following procedures: -

- Supporting all persons and children
- All staff, committee and board members are mandated to report reasonable concerns of harm about a child to Tusla
- A designated Liaison Officer is appointed who is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and they act as liaison person with other agencies
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool ensures Safe Recruitment and Garda Vetting of all staff
- Provision of child protection information, instruction and training of all staff
- All staff follow a Code of Behaviour
- Confidentiality Statement
- Supervision
- Management of Staff

The staff and volunteers are committed to safe guarding the Safety and Welfare of all the children in our care. We will also adhere to The Criminal Justice (withholding of Information on Offences Against the Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, which requires any person with information regarding an offence against a child to report it to An Garda Síochána.

Our policy is to co-operate with TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána and we will share records should a child welfare or protection issue arise with the appropriate authorities.

Signed: The Management,  
June, 2023

## RISK ASSESSMENT - CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015

**Under the Children First Act 2015, Ardfinnan Community Playschool must undertake a risk assessment, this assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children while in our care, the context of this risk is in relation to abuse rather than general harm.**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool risk assessment process enables our service to:

- Identify potential risks
- Develop policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks

It is the understanding of Ardfinnan Community Playschool that it is not possible to eliminate risk completely, but risks can be significantly reduced when properly managed. Ardfinnan Community Playschool adheres to all policies, producers and laws governing Early Years Services and is a member of Early Childhood Ireland.

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**Ardfinnan Community Playschool will ensure that: -**

- An assessment of any risks to a child is undertaken while the child is availing of its services in accordance with the Children First Act 2015.
- The ‘Child Safeguarding Statement’ is reviewed at least every 24 months, or after any material change in what it relates to, in accordance with the Children First Act 2015.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, family status and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All persons working with children (paid/unpaid) working in or on behalf of Ardfinnan Community Playschool have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated liaison officer who shall liaise with Tusla
- A copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement will be available to read in our reception area, and when requested, furnished to staff members, parents’ guardians, TUSLA or members of the public

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

<p><b>Step 1</b> Identify potential risks</p>	<p>Think about who or what might cause harm to children or young people using your service.</p> <p>Make sure all persons in the service, including children, are involved in this process.</p> <p>Different people will have different perceptions of what is a risk.</p>	
<p><b>Step 2</b> Rank each risk</p>	<p>Rank each risk in terms of low, medium and high risks.</p> <p>To help rank each risk, consider the likelihood of the risk occurring and how serious the consequences could be.</p>	
<p><b>Step 3</b> Control and manage risks</p>	<p>Who owns the risk? Assign risk owners.</p> <p>What current controls are in place to reduce the risk?</p> <p>What future actions must be done to reduce the risk?</p> <p>What else do you need to do about the risk?</p>	
<p><b>Step 4</b> Monitor and review all risks</p>	<p>Are the controls effective?</p> <p>Are the actions effective?</p>	

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Under the Children First Act 2015, Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Guidance for Developing for a Child Safeguarding Statement for Early Years Services 2018 Ardfinnan Community Playschool have implemented the following safeguarding policies and procedures.

- Procedures are in place to maintain a list of mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015
- A Designated Liaison Person and Deputy have been appointed

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- Child Protection Policy is reviewed regularly
- Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures are in place
- Confidentiality Policy
- Documentation and Record Keeping Policies are in place and regularly updated in line with government guidelines
- Safe Recruitment Policy
- Induction Policy which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding Statement and all related policies and procedures
- Garda Vetting compulsory for all staff, committee and board members
- All staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – Introduction to Children First and relevant staff have attended Always Children First Child Protection Training
- Complaints Policy
- Outings Policy
- Accident and Incidents policy
- Media and Communications Policy
- Risk Assessment Procedures
- Student and Volunteer Information Pack

### Implementation and review

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying Child Safeguarding policies and procedures. These policies and procedures support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement is reviewed every 2 years or as soon as is practicable after there has been a change in guidelines which refer to our Child Safeguarding Policy

The statement is displayed in the service. It has also been provided to all staff, volunteers, committee and board members and any other persons involved with our service. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

#### CHILD WELFARE

## CHILDREN FIRST

*“Every child is born with fundamental human rights: the right to health care and education; the right to be treated equally, and to be protected from harm. These rights are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets the context for our work with children”.* Early Childhood Ireland.

We at Ardfinnan Community Playschool endeavour to always put the needs of the children attending our service first and to meet these needs in a respectful manner and to the benefit of each child. To do this we have put together a series of policies to ensure the best interests of the child will take priority in all decisions.

The United Nation convention on the rights of the child 1992 four “general principles” state

- *that all the rights guaranteed by the UNCRC must be available to all children without discrimination of any kind (Article 2);*

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- *that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3);*
- *that every child has the right to life, survival and development (Article 6);*
- *that the child's view must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her (Article 12).*

[www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)

The convention stipulates the following substantive provisions; Civil rights and freedom

- *The right to a name and nationality*
- *The right to a sense of identity*
- *The right to freedom and expression*
- *The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion*
- *The right to freedom and association*
- *The right to privacy*
- *No child shall be subject to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*

### MISSION STATEMENT

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of all children who attend the service. The service uses recommendations made in the Dept. of Health and Children publication "*Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*" and acknowledges the rights and welfare of all children to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.

We will also adhere to *The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012*.

Our policy is to co-operate with TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána. We will share records should a child welfare or protection issue arise with the appropriate authorities. Our policy is to co-operate with the TUSLA Children and Family Services and we will share records should a child welfare or protection issue arise with the appropriate authorities.

### Inclusion

**Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a detailed policy on Inclusion which states:** Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a policy of equality of care, respect and value for all children. We welcome and support children with additional needs, and their families

### Management of Staff and Volunteers

**All staff, students, volunteers are Garda Vetted prior to their start date**

### Induction

All staff and volunteers whether temporary or permanent will receive induction training and will be given an induction pack, which will include a Child Protection Policy and other relevant policies and procedures. Individuals will sign a declaration at the back page stating that they have read, understood and agree to all the policies and procedures.

### Training

We here at Ardfinnan Community Playschool take our responsibilities for co-ordinating ongoing training for all staff with special emphasis on child protection and welfare very serious. We will avail of workshops run by TúsIa and Tipperary County Childcare.

All new employees will sign a confidentiality statement.

Staff will be required to undertake training to enhance and update their childcare skills.

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**Supervision**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we value working as a team and have regular team and one to one meetings to offer staff care, support and supervision. In the unlikely event of any difficulty that may arise we endeavour to resolve these constructively through staff supervision, alternatively through the grievance/disciplinary procedures

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**CHILD WELFARE**

## PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE IN CHILD PROTECTION

We acknowledge our corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard children by the following means

- Promoting the general welfare, health, development and safety of children.
- Adhere to all key legislation regarding Child Protection.
- Adopting and consistently applying a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers. We will ensure that all staff are carefully selected, trained, supervised and appropriately qualified and let parents and children know how to voice their concerns if there is anything they are not happy about.
- All personnel working with children should undertake a Gardaí Vetting form
- We aim to raise awareness within the organisation about potential risks to children's safety and welfare via our child protection policy and encouraging staff to take part in child protection awareness training.
- Establishing policies and procedures and ensuring good record keeping.
- Giving parents, children and workers information about what we do and what you expect from us
- Adopting reporting procedures to follow in any case of suspected child abuse.

**Definitions/Signs & Symptoms**

Child abuse can be difficult to identify and may present itself in many forms. It is important to stress that no one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse; it may indeed indicate conditions other than abuse. All signs must be considered in the child's social and family context.

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time, Neglect, Emotional, Physical and Sexual abuse.

*Definitions of abuse as outlined in the Children First Publication are under the following headings: Neglect, Emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.*

**Definition of Neglect**

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs met in terms of supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be deprived of intellectual stimulation.

*Harm* can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

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**Definition of Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent / care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

**Definition of Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or a person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

**Definition of Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

**Children with Special Vulnerabilities**

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. These include children with disabilities and children who, for one reason or another, are separated from parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse - neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse - may be applicable, but may take a slightly different form.

**INDICATORS****NEGLECT**

The following are indicators of neglect in a child

- Wears soiled clothing or clothing that is significantly too small or large, or is often in need of repair
- Seems inadequately dressed for the weather
- Always seems to be hungry, hoards, steals or begs for food, comes to school with little or no food
- Often appears listless and tired, with little energy
- Frequently reports caring for younger siblings
- Demonstrates poor hygiene, smells of urine or faeces, has dirty or decaying teeth
- Seems emaciated or has a distended stomach (indicative of malnutrition)
- Has unattended medical or dental problems, such as infected sores
- Displaying apathy, unresponsive to affection
- States that there is no one at home to provide care
- Presents with frequent accidents and / or minor injuries
- Growth not within the expected range
- Signs of developmental delay, poor attention / concentration, lack of self-confidence / poor self-esteem, low academic achievement (including erratic or non-school attendance)
- Behavioural signs, e.g., overactive, aggressive, poor coping skills, impulsive behaviour, indiscriminate friendliness, withdrawn, poor social skills development, bed-wetting, soiling or destructive behaviours, substance misuse, running away, sexual promiscuity, self-harm, offending behaviours.

**INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE NEGLECT IN PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR**

It can be difficult to observe a situation and to know for certain whether neglect has occurred. Behaviours and attitudes indicating that a parent or other adult caregiver may be neglectful include if he or she:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner

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- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- Denies the existence of or blames the child for the child's problems in school or at home
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless or burdensome
- Looks to the child primarily for care, attention and/ or satisfaction of emotional needs:

#### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF NEGLECT**

Abandonment or desertion	Malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding
Children persistently being left alone without adequate care and supervision	Lack of warmth
Lack of adequate clothing	Exploited, overworked.
Lack of protection and exposure to danger including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age	Non-organic failure to thrive i.e., child not gaining weight not alone due to malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation
Persistent failure to attend school	Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical problems

#### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

The following are indicators of Emotional Abuse

- The imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions
- Emotional unavailability of the child's parent / carer
- Unresponsiveness of the parent / carer and / or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way
- Under-or over-protection of the child
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development
- Use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology

#### **The following are signs and symptoms of Emotional Abuse**

Rejection	Lack of attachment
Lack of praise and encouragement	Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
Lack of comfort and love	Serious over-protectiveness
Lack of continuity of care (e.g., frequent moves)	Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking in bedrooms)
Family conflicts and/or violence	Every child who is abused sexually, physically or neglected is also emotionally abused
Inappropriate expectations of a child's behaviour - relative to his/her age and stage of development	

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**Physical Abuse**

The following are indicators of Physical Abuse

- Severe physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Terrorising with threats
- Observing violence
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated / induced illness
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child

**The Following are signs and symptoms of Physical Abuse**

Bruises	Abrasions/Lacerations
Fractures	Damage to body organs
Swollen joints	Poisonings - repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol)
Burns/Scalds	Haemorrhages (retinal, subdural)
Failure to thrive	Coma/Unconsciousness
Death.	

**Sexual Abuse**

The following are indicators of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse - Cases of sexual abuse principally come to light through: -

- (a) disclosure by the child or its siblings/friends;
- (b) the suspicions of an adult;
- (c) due to physical symptoms.

Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in young children (0-10 yrs.) include:

Bed wetting, soiling	Noticeable and uncharacteristic change of behaviour
Pains, tummy aches, headaches with no evident physical cause	Hints about sexual activity
Bleeding from the genital areas	Age - inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour
Difficulty/pain in passing urine/faeces	Inappropriate seductive behaviour
Uncharacteristic sexual play with peers/toys	Sexually aggressive behaviour with others
Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing, e.g., games/swimming	Mood change, e.g., child becomes withdrawn, fearful, acting out
Lack of concentration (change in school performance)	Skin disorders

Reluctance to go to bed, nightmares, changes in sleep patterns	School refusal
Separation anxiety	Loss of appetite, overeating, hiding food
Isolation.	Pains, tummy aches, headaches with no evident physical cause

**DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS.**

The Designated Liaison Person role is to ensure that all aspects of the Child Protection Policy is adhered to, reviewed annually, to keep records, ensure in-house training on child protection procedures, raise awareness for staff members, liaise with TUSLA / An Garda Siochana where necessary.

The Designated Liaison Person for Ardfinnan Community Playschool is Erica Condon.

Onsite Erica Condon / Elaine Cowan will act as deputy / first point of contact for staff to report any suspicions/allegations.

**Contact Details**

- Erica Condon, Lead Educator, Designated Liaison Officer- Tel: 052/7464488 Mobile: 087/7602175
- Breda Murphy, Vice-Chairperson, Board of Management, Designated Liaison Person, Mobile: 086/3294639

**TUSLA Social Work Services**

Anne Marie Stafford  
 Tusla - Child and Family Agency  
 Community Care Headquarters  
 James's Green  
 Kilkenny  
 R95 RP26  
 Tel: 059 - 9129500 | [AMCKST@tusla.ie](mailto:AMCKST@tusla.ie)

**South Tipperary Dedicated Contact Points**

**DISCUSS/REPORT A CONCERN**

Contact details if you need to report a concern about a child or need to discuss a concern

Child and Family Agency,  
 Yellow House,  
 Wester Road,  
 Clonmel,  
 Co Tipperary.  
 E91 PR83  
 052 6177302

Marie Kennedy  
 Child and Family Agency,  
 Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary, Community Services,  
 James Green,  
 Kilkenny.  
 Tel 056 - 7784713 email: [marieu.kennedy@tusla.ie](mailto:marieu.kennedy@tusla.ie)

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If a child is in immediate danger or if the social work service is unavailable, report concerns to:  
**An Gardaí Síochána – Ardfinnan 052/7466203, Cahir 052/7445630, Clonmel 052/617764**

## HEALTH

# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to safeguarding children, staff, parents and all visitors to our service. All possible precautions are taken to prevent and avoid any accidents/incidents that could cause harm to children or adults (staff and visitors) in the service. This includes carrying out risk assessments and providing a safety statement as guided and informed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), ensuring the environment is safe (while allowing for appropriate levels of risk and challenge) and providing adequate and appropriate supervision of the children at all times.

Should an incident occur, staff will immediately alert the manager or designated person. It is the responsibility of the manager to determine whether the incident is deemed to be a critical incident. In the case of a critical incident, the manager or designated person will lead the emergency response guided by our **Critical Incident Plan**.

Where there is an accident or an incident in which a child or an adult in the service is injured, staff members will ensure that the child or adult is attended to, proper treatment is given and appropriate measures are taken to avoid any worsening of the situation. The injury will be given immediate attention and be assessed by a staff member with First Aid training to determine what type of medical attention, if any, is required.

The GP and/or the emergency services will be contacted immediately if there is any concern for a child's welfare. Steps to take in an emergency are detailed clearly on the notice boards of the children's rooms and the office.

Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately if the accident, incident or injury involves a child and is serious enough to require attention from a qualified medical practitioner or the emergency services. In the case of an adult, their next of kin will be contacted immediately if the injured person requires an ambulance and/or hospitalisation.

At least one person working with the children will have up-to-date training in First Aid and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

At a minimum one person trained in First Aid for children will be on the premises at all times. At least one person with training in First Aid for children will always accompany the children on outings.

A written Incident Report will always be documented and kept on record in the event of any accident, incident or injury to any child or adult in the premises or while in the care of Ardfinnan Community Playschool.

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we understand that accidents will happen from time to time. We have a detailed procedure for managing accidents and incidents. However, we follow strict guidelines to help prevent accidents. The health and safety of all the children, families, staff and visitors who use our service is of most importance to us.

### Principle

This policy is guided by The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005 and 2010 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, and The Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981

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**Measures to be taken to prevent accidents and incidents:**

In Ardfinnan Community Playschool, we have taken the following measures to prevent accidents and incidents.

- We have appointed a First Aid Officer and a Health & Safety Officer
- We have a Health & Safety Policy & procedure, a Risk Management policy and we carry out regular risk assessments both indoors and outdoors.
- All staff receives regular Support and Supervision and reflects on their practice.
- A Training schedule is provided for all staff to maintain their levels of qualifications and renew training when it falls due as per regulations and legislation.
- Our building, equipment and materials are well maintained, and there is a policy and procedure in place to ensure any defects are dealt with immediately.
- All staff are familiar with the policies and procedures in our service and there are detailed induction policies and procedures for new staff.
- A fully stocked first aid box is provided with a content's checklist, easily identifiable and in a location which is known to all adults.
- At least one member of staff who holds an up to date First Aid Certificate is on the premises at all times
- Adult child ratios are maintained at all times.
- All staff have appropriate qualifications to ensure that they provide the required level of care and attention to safeguard all children in our setting.
- Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency
- We have a detailed Critical Incident Policy, in case of emergencies, where a child, staff member or visitor has to be removed to a hospital by ambulance
- We have a list of all emergency numbers displayed in the main office.

**Procedure to be followed in the event of an accident or incident:****In the case of a minor accident or incident:**

- The child or children will be attended to immediately and a staff member will alert the Room Leader or First Aid Officer to access treatment if and as necessary. If it is a minor incident the staff member will reassure the child and administer First Aid (if required) as per First Aid Training.
- An incident report will be recorded in the Accident & Incident Book, counter signed by the Room Leader and shared with the child's parents on arrival.
- A copy of the incident will be kept on the child's individual file as well as in the Accident & Incident Book.

**In the case of an accident which requires medical intervention the following procedure is in place:**

- The Room Leader and or First Aid Officer will be informed immediately
- Treatment will be assessed, while the child/children are comforted and attended to.
- The Room Leader/First Aid Officer will telephone the local doctor on call or an ambulance.
- The Room Leader/First Aid Officer will provide the emergency services with the child's name, contact numbers and any known allergies/ medical records.
- The Room Leader or Administrator will contact the child's parents/ guardians by telephone.
- The exact time and date the call was made will be recorded.
- A member of staff (2 members where possible) will accompany the child to the GP/emergency room if the parents are not available.
- Remaining staff will reassure the other children and if necessary, explain the accident to other parents.
- Staff who witnessed the accident should fill in the accident report form.

- If the child has to go to hospital before the parent/carer arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to hospital and stay until the parent/carer arrives.
- The child's record card must be brought for reference.

**If the accident does not warrant outside intervention:**

- The First Aid Officer will treat the injury and she and the person who witnessed the accident will complete an accident form.
- This will be read and signed by the Room Leader and signed by the child's parent/guardian.
- The accident report form is kept in the child's file and stored until the child is 21 Years.
- Minor accidents will be treated in the playschool and parents/carers will be advised of the injury and the action taken by phone call as soon as possible,

**Reporting & Record Keeping:**

- All Accidents (minor or major) and Incidents will be recorded in the Accident & Incident Book, counter signed by the Room Leader or First Aid Officer, shared with parents and signed and a copy kept on the child's individual file, as well as in the Accident & Incident Book and stored on the premises until the child reaches the age of 21.
- All accidents must be reported to the insurance company at the time of the accident. All accidents & incidents will be reviewed in line with our Health & Safety Policies.

**Responsibilities**

**The Room Leader is responsible for ensuring that:**

- Risk assessments are carried out and a safety statement is provided
- All staff members are aware of their responsibility to help prevent accidents and incidents
- All staff members know exactly what to do in the event of an accident, incident or injury.
- Ensure that contact details for emergency services are displayed clearly in a readily accessible location close to an easily accessible telephone.
- Ensure that contact details for the local GP are always immediately accessible.
- Ensure that least one member of staff on duty has completed a recognised First Aid course for children (First Aid Response- FAR).
- Provide a properly stocked First Aid box. The First Aid box must be accompanied by a list of essential contents.
- Assign a member of staff to restock the First Aid box after every use and to do a monthly check to ensure that the contents match the essential contents list and supplies are in date.
- Contact the emergency services in the event of a serious injury.
- Contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible.
- In the absence of the parent/guardian being available arrange for a staff member to accompany a child in an ambulance or to a GP if necessary.
- Arrange for relief staff, if required.
- Assess whether an incident is to be deemed a Critical Incident.
- Assess whether an accident/incident is one which is to be notified to Tusla and/or other appropriate outside authorities and to ensure that this is done effectively and efficiently.

**The staff member who witnessed the accident/incident/injury completes a report form on all accidents/incidents/injuries that occur in the service.**

**An accident/incident report includes:**

- Name, date of birth and age of the child or adult affected.
- Name of person/s dealing with the accident/incident.

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- Date and time of the accident/incident.
- Place of the accident/incident.
- Detailed description of the accident/incident.
- Circumstances surrounding the accident/incident, including any apparent illness or symptoms.
- Name of the parents/guardians contacted and the time they were contacted.
- Nature of the injury.
- Treatment provided – medication or First Aid administered.
- Medical personnel or emergency services contacted and time of contact.
- Details of any person(s) present.
- Details and signatures of any witness/es.
- Names of those to whom the accident was notified and date and time.
- When the child was collected and by whom or removed to hospital.
- Details of the accident area/layout including the number of adults and children present
- Details of all communications with parents or guardians in relation to the accident/incident.
- Signatures of parents or guardians.
- Details of any investigation completed in relation to the accident/incident.
- Details of all required corrective and preventative actions taken.
- Details of any changes made to policy and/or practice following the review of the accident or incident.
- Details of whether the incident/accident has been notified to Tusla.
- Details of notification of the accident/incident to other external party such as:
  - Tusla Social Work Services if there is a child protection concern.
  - Garda Síochána where there is a danger to staff or children, or a criminal offence.
  - Health and Safety Authority where the incident is dangerous, or a staff member has been injured as a result.
  - The Service's insurance, where appropriate.
  - Name and signature of the person writing the report.
  - Time and date of the report.
  - Review and close off of the report by the Registered Provider.

#### **Follow up contact with the child's parents/guardians**

Out of concern for all of the children and families attending the service, in the case of an accident involving a child we would wish to contact the child's parent on the day following the accident/incident to know how the child is recovering.

#### **Reporting to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate**

In addition, a Notification of Incident Form is completed and submitted to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate where any of the incidents warrant reporting. The form used is available at [www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/notification-of-incidents-form/](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/notification-of-incidents-form/)

#### **Retention of records**

Records are retained for a period of two years from the date on which the child to whom the record relates ceased to attend the service. Accident and Incident records are retained until the child reaches the age of 21 years.

#### **HEALTH**

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

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**Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that parents have the prime responsibility for their child's health and should provide our service with information about their child's medical needs including information on medicines their child needs as well as contact information for their child's GP. As we are a sessional preschool and children attend for a maximum of 3 hours per day Ardfinnan Community Playschool advises parents/guardians to ensure medicines are administered to children before arrival at the centre and after they have left.

Upon Enrolment the parents will meet with the Lead Educator to discuss and agree with the parents/guardians on what is to be the service's role in relation to meeting the child's medication needs, in accordance with this policy.

**Principle**

This policy is underpinned by **The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 Regulation 10 and Regulation 16** and the **Safety Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005 and 2010** and the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007**

**Parents'/Guardians' role and responsibilities**

The parent/guardian must provide the following details on the child's enrolment to the service:

- Details of any medical condition
- Emergency contact numbers
- GP details – name, address and phone number
- Written details of any medication required
- Information on any allergies
- Special dietary needs

**Parents/guardians must make every possible effort to ensure that the child's medication needs are met before arriving at the service and after returning home.**

Where this is not possible, Parents are to meet with lead educator to implement an **Individual Care Plan** to support their child during their time at our service. Parents/guardians must complete in full the Consent Form for Administration of Medication and provide all of the information the service will need to:

- safely store medicines
- administer the necessary medication to their child
- deal with any issues or incidents arising relating to their child's condition or the administration of the medication
- Medication must be provided by parents/guardians in its original labelled container as dispensed by a pharmacist including the child's full name, prescriber's instructions for administration, clear storage instructions, the date it was dispensed and the expiry date.
- Medicines must never be transferred from their original container as dispensed by a pharmacist which includes the prescriber's instructions for administration.
- Where a recipient needs two or more prescribed medicines, each should be in its own separate container and clearly labelled as above
- Parents must sign the completed medication administration form to acknowledge notification for each day that medication is required.

**Staff members' responsibilities**

Parents must be informed of the policy and procedures on the administration of medications in the service.

Where informed consent has been obtained for the administration of medicines from at least one of the child's parents/guardians then the following will apply:

- The child must have received the medication for at least 24 hours prior to it being given in the service.
- All medications will be administered by a staff member competent to do so.
- Staff members will receive training where required if they are expected to administer medication and they must be made aware of how the medication reacts with food, fluids or other medication. Training will also be provided on the proper use of equipment such as inhalers
- All medications will be stored safely away from children's reach and according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Staff members can only administer medication to a child that has been prescribed for that particular child.
- A list of those staff members authorised to administer medications is available on request

**Administering Medication**

General points of note:

- Only staff members authorised by the lead educator to do so, and appropriately trained for the specific medications, are to administer medication.
- Medication must not be added to the child's bottle or food unless the registered prescriber has directed that this is how it should be administered.
- Instructions which state that a prescribed medication may be used whenever needed must be reviewed with the parent at least at the beginning of each term.
- 'As needed' medications for example an inhaler must be labelled with the child's name and in their original container labelled with the required information
- Medication must not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the health care professional.
- All staff members should follow hygiene procedures for example hand washing and drying.

**Before administration of medication**

A second staff member must be present when medications are administered. Both staff members must confirm:

- That appropriate consent has been given
- That the child's identification is in accordance with the medication to be administered
- The date and time the medication was last given
- Recipient's name
- Prescribed dose
- Expiry date
- Written instructions provided by the prescriber on the label/container as dispensed by the pharmacist
- Any possible side effects
- If there is any doubt about any of the procedures, the authorised member of staff should check with parents/guardians and/or a health professional before taking further action.
- It must be checked that the medicine has previously been administered without adverse effect to the child and that parents have confirmed this is the case – a note to this effect should be recorded in the written parental agreement for the setting to administer medicine.

**On administration of medication**

Both staff members must confirm:

- The correct medication
- Medication is given to the correct child.
- The medication is given at the correct time and date.
- The correct dose is given.
- The correct route of administration.
- Appropriate equipment is used to administer the medication dose – for liquids the correct measuring tool provided with the medication.
- The dignity and privacy of the child is ensured as appropriate – for example when medication is required to be administered by a route other than the oral route.

**After administration of medication**

- Observe child for any possible side effects.
- Where appropriate observe their response to medication – for example where an anti-febrile agent is administered. (*Anti-febrile Medication is used to reduce a raised body temperature. The most common anti-febrile medications used are Paracetamol and Ibuprofen.*)
- Medication returned to appropriate storage.
- Appropriate management or disposal of any equipment used in administration.

**Accidents and Incidents Involving Medications**

**Where a child refuses to take the medication prescribed for them, they must not be forced to do so but parents/guardians must be informed as a matter of urgency. If the child not taking the medication leads to an emergency situation, the emergency services and the parents must be called.**

- Failure to administer medication at the time prescribed as requested by a health care professional or parent/guardian should be noted on the Medication Administration Form with a written explanation of why the medication was not given.
- If a child is mistakenly given another child's medication, a doctor must be called immediately, and the advice given must be followed. The parents of the child who mistakenly received the medication must be called as soon as possible.
- The poisons information line number, GP, Pharmacist, and other emergency numbers must be readily available at all times

**Dealing with Emergencies**

If an emergency happens with a child who has an Individual Care Plan, please follow instructions on plan.

Where medication is administered in the case of an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency, both the emergency services and the child's parents/guardians must be notified as soon as possible.

- All relevant staff members need to know where to obtain First Aid and how to summon the emergency services.
- Where a child is taken to hospital by ambulance, they must be accompanied by a member of staff who is to remain with them until a parent/guardian arrives
- All required information is shared with the emergency services and the child's parents/guardians.
- Staff support is essential following any such incident.

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## Allergic Reactions

On enrolment and when updating information each year, Ardfinnan Community Playschool seeks specific information about allergies as part of the health information provided by parents/carers.

Specific questions are included in the Registration Form and we ask parents to notify us of any changes.

When completing forms parents are asked if the child has an allergy and to provide a list of the allergens which may lead to anaphylaxis.

## Food allergy

A food allergy occurs when the immune system forms antibodies against food proteins similar to the way it does to fight bacteria and viruses. These food proteins are called allergens. This usually happens very early in life, as early as 3 to 6 months of age. Every time after that when the body is re-exposed to those food proteins an immune reaction is triggered.

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool our aim is to keep all children safe by putting specific safety measures in place for children who have food allergies, while ensuring that they experience a full and inclusive environment.

## Risk minimisation

Any food allergy can potentially trigger a life-threatening allergic reaction. To minimise this risk the following measures are in place:

- Children are encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating
- The concept of never sharing food is promoted “sharing is caring but we don’t share food”.
- Eating is supervised and orderly with children sitting rather than walking around which increases the risk of exposure.
- Teaching strategies such as role play and group discussion are used to encourage children’s understanding and awareness of food allergy amongst their peers where appropriate.
- Events that may increase the risk of allergic reaction i.e., birthdays, cooking activities, arts and crafts, nature walks, are identified and consideration is given to how these events can be managed without excluding the child who has an allergy.
- Parents/guardians of children who are at risk if allergic reactions will be consulted when the Service is considering putting in place preventative practices with implications for their child or other children in the service.
- All parents/guardians will be notified of allergies to minimize the risk of the allergens being brought into the service; this will be done in a confidential manner where no names will be provided.
- Opportunities to increase understanding of anaphylaxis may be provided to parents through our newsletter, notice board and face sheets

## Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening.

Anaphylaxis should be treated as a medical emergency requiring immediate response /treatment.

Anaphylaxis occurs after exposure to an allergen (foods like nuts, egg, milk, insect stings or some medicines). Occasionally the person is unaware of the allergy.

Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction can occur within minutes of exposure to the offending substance. Specific warning signs as well as the severity and intensity of symptoms can vary from person to person and sometimes from

reaction to reaction in the same person. Because of the unpredictability of reactions early symptoms, or expressions of concern, should never be ignored especially if the person has suffered an anaphylactic reaction in the past.

**In some cases, anaphylaxis is preceded by a less dangerous allergic reaction.**

**Symptoms can include:**

- Swelling of face, lips and eyes
- Hives or welts on the skin
- Stomach pain, vomiting.
- Tingling in mouth.

**More serious cases could result in:**

- Difficulty/noisy breathing
- Dizziness, light-headedness, feeling weak.
- Swelling of tongue
- Swelling/tightness in throat
- Difficulty talking and/or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (in young children)

#### **EpiPen or Adrenaline Pen**

Children diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis are prescribed adrenaline in an auto-injector which is commonly known as an EpiPen. Adrenaline given through an EpiPen to the outer thigh muscle is the most effective treatment for anaphylaxis, as when injected it rapidly reverses the effects of a severe allergic reaction. It is a single use pre-loaded automatic injection and is designed to be used as a first aid device by people without formal medical training.

**If a child has been prescribed an EpiPen, the EpiPen must be provided by the child's parent/carers to the Service.**

#### **Medications Records**

Staff members involved must keep records each time they administer medication using the Record of Medication Administration Form

- A medication record must be created and kept for each child to whom medication is, or is to be, administered.

The record for both prescription and non-prescription medications must include:

- The name of the child
- A consent signed by the parents/guardians to administer each medication
- A medication administration log detailing the checks completed prior to administration of medication to the child including:
  - Check of the child's identification
  - Whether consent was received
  - When the medication was last administered (either at home or in the service)
  - Check of the administration instructions, including the name of the medication, the method and times for administration and the required dose
  - Check to ensure the medication is within expiry date

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- The time and date the medication was administered
- The route and dose of medication administered
- The signature of the person who administered the medication and the signature of the witness
- The time and date, or the circumstances under which, the medication is scheduled to be next administered
- Any side-effects noted after the medication was given or if the dose was not retained because of the child vomiting or spitting out the medication.
- The number of attempts to give medications that were refused by the child is also documented

### **Storage of Medications**

All medications brought into the setting are stored according to the manufacturers' instructions paying particular note to temperature, sources of moisture, light and sources of contamination and safely out of the reach of children.

- Medicines are stored safely in a secure container, accessible to authorised persons.
- Emergency medication such as asthma inhalers and adrenaline pens must be readily accessible to authorised staff members in case of an emergency when time is of the essence. A copy of the consent form for administration of medication and clear, precise details of the action to be taken should be immediately accessible.
- Medications requiring refrigeration should be clearly marked and separated from food in an airtight container marked 'Medications'. Access to the fridge should be restricted.
- Medications that are applied to skin should be kept separate from medications that are injected into the body or taken by mouth.
- Medicines must never be transferred from their original container as dispensed by a pharmacist which includes the prescriber's instructions for administration.
- Non-prescription medications should be labelled with the child's full name and the expiry date must be visible and monitored.

Staff members should only bring their own medication to work when it is absolutely necessary (either prescribed or over the counter). They must ensure that these medications are stored securely so that others (including children and adult service users) do not have access to these medications. This includes for example medications held on the person, held at desks, in their bags, coats or in vehicles.

### **Disposal of Medications**

Medication should be returned to the child's parents whenever:

- The course of treatment is complete
- Labels become detached or unreadable
- Instructions are changed by a health care professional
- The expiry date has been reached
- When the child ceases to attend in the service

To ensure a complete record all medication returned, even empty bottles, should be recorded.

- If a parent has not picked up unused medication by 14 days after the required use or it is not possible to return a medicine to the parent, then it should be taken to a community pharmacy for disposal. No medicine should be disposed of into the sewerage system or in the refuse.

### Sunscreen Application

Parental consent is required when a sunscreen supplied by the service is used. When providing consent parents are informed of the exact brand and type of sunscreen used by Ardfinnan Community Playschool. Sunscreen supplied by parents does not require consent. Sunscreen supplied by parents is labelled with the child's name and is only used for that child.

Sunscreen is stored out of children's reach and labelled with the date it was first opened.

Sunscreen is brought on outings as needed. (Please see policy on Sun Protection)

### Outings

As part of the planning process and risk assessment for outings, the medication needs of children are taken into account. Specific measures may be necessary to support those who need to take medication and to ensure sufficient medical supplies are available.

All staff members participating in the outing must be aware of the medication needs of the children and any agreed medical emergency procedures. A member of staff who has been trained to administer the required medication must be present. All staff must know their role in the event of a medical emergency. A copy of any individual care plans should be taken on outings as the information may be needed in the event of an emergency.

Lead staff member must have contact details for each child and first aid bag on all outings.

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## HEALTH

# INFECTION CONTROL

### Statement:

Ardfinnan Community Playschool promotes a healthy lifestyle through prevention of illness and establishing healthy eating habits through our curriculum and healthy eating policy.

It is our priority to protect all children attending our service and all persons working here from the transmission of infections. The health and wellbeing of all children staff and visitors to our service is paramount and our aim is to prevent and manage an infection which may be present in the service This policy is communicated to all staff and is available to all parents on request

### Legislation and regulatory requirements:

- **Regulation 10 of the Child Care Act 1991** (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, requires a Policy on Infection Control that specifies the procedures to be followed in the service to protect staff members (paid and unpaid) and children attending the service from the transmission of infections.
- **Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child** requires that the Infection Control Policy is implemented; staff know their roles and responsibilities and have received training on the policy.
- **Regulation 31: Notification of Incidents** requires that where there is a diagnosis of a notifiable illness as defined in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981(SI No 390 of 1981) of any child attending the service or any staff members this must be notified to the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.
- **The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005**, Number 10 of 2005, sets out the general duties of all employers to manage the safety, health and welfare of their employees in any place of employment.
- **The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations 2013** (S.I. No. 572 of 2013) set down the minimum requirements for the protection of workers from the health risks associated with biological agents in the workplace. [biological agents include bacteria and viruses] The duties include

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carrying out a risk assessment and putting in place the appropriate measures to protect employees' health and safety.

**Aim:**

Infection can lead to serious ill-health for young children. Infection control procedures seek to reduce the risk of children and staff contracting an illness in Ardfinnan Community Playschool by ensuring good hygiene is followed at all times and the risk of infection is minimised.

We aim to promote good hygiene practices that children and parents can implement at home by:

- promoting and protecting the health of all children and adults in the service and reduce the risk of infection
- providing guidelines to parent/guardians/carers as users of the service about the attendance of sick children and to keep the incidence of infectious disease to a minimum
- helping to differentiate between minor (can attend the service) and more significant (should not attend the service) infections and to give guidance on the prevention and management of infectious disease

**Children need:**

- The service to have efficient and effective systems and procedures in place that ensure that their health and wellbeing are protected
- Their parents/guardians to know what their responsibility is, in helping to protect them and others in the service

**Parents need:**

- To be clear on what systems and procedures are in place to protect their children from infections and to deal with any incidences of infection that occur in the service
- To know the durations and the reasons for any exclusion periods that may apply in relation to their child during any incidences of infectious diseases and they need to know what will happen should their child become ill while attending the service

**Staff need:**

- To be very clear on their roles and responsibilities relating to infection control in the service
- To know what parents/guardians must be told in relation to keeping their child away from the service during any outbreak of an infectious disease and exactly what to do in the case of a child becoming ill while at the service

**Management need:**

- This policy to help with ensuring that their legislative and regulatory responsibilities relating to infection control in the service are met and that all relevant best practice guidelines are implemented in the service
- To ensure that all staff and parents/guardians are clear on their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting everyone in the service, the reasons for, the required duration of, exclusion periods for any diagnosed cases of infectious illness.

**Preventing the spread of infection****4 basic principles of infection control**

1. **Handwashing:** this is the single most effective way of preventing the spread of infection and will be used at every opportunity (please see our Handwashing policy)

2. **Respiratory Hygiene:** all adults and children will be encouraged to cover their mouths and nose when coughing or sneezing (please see our Respiratory Hygiene policy)
3. **Immunisation:** all children and staff should be appropriately immunized (please see our Immunisation policy)
4. **Exclusion:** any unwell staff member or child should not attend if they have a communicable illness (please see our Illness policy)

### Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are undertaken by staff to assess if activities, actions or environments pose risks from an infection control standpoint to the children and staff of Ardfinnan Community Playschool. Actions are implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk identified through risk assessment.

### Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are included in our team approach to infection control. A co-operative approach between parents and the service helps to ensure a healthy environment for the children

Parents/guardians who feel their child is too ill or unwell to participate in indoor or outdoor activity are advised to keep them home to ensure a complete recovery and notify the service of such.

Parents/guardians must inform the service of any known infectious illness in their child. This is of particular importance if the illness might affect others in the service, for example, if a child develops chicken pox or measles or other such contagious illnesses.

Parents/guardians are informed if there are any outbreaks of infection in the service

Parents/guardians of children with any chronic (persistent or long-term) infectious conditions will be encouraged to share this information with the service.

### Hand washing

Hand washing is the single most effective way of preventing the spread of infection; its purpose is to remove or destroy germs that are picked up on the hands

- Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a hand washing policy in place which all staff promote and model for children. Staff wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating/preparing food, after wiping noses, after waste disposal and mopping up spills, after assisting children going to the toilet, after caring for sick children, after handling soiled clothing, after dealing with waste and after removing disposable gloves.
- A wash hand basin is provided in the playroom with a constant supply of hot and cold running water, liquid anti-bacterial soap and paper towels. A wash hand basin is available in all bathrooms and the kitchen.
- Children are encouraged to wash their hands with warm water and liquid soap under supervision after visiting the toilet, before eating, after sneezing, coughing or blowing noses, after handling animals, after touching a cut or sore and after outside play and activities. Clear guidance on hand washing is outlined for children and staff in our service.
- Staff will supervise and assist children to encourage effective hand washing.

### Toileting

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recommend that all children are fully toilet trained prior to starting preschool, each child is offered help where needed and encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet. There are two wash

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basins with warm and cold running water and there is access to liquid soap and paper towel dispensers. Staff that are assisting children use powder free, synthetic vinyl or latex gloves and wash their hands after removing the gloves.

### **Respiratory Hygiene (coughing and sneezing)**

All adults and children cover their mouths and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, if no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand. Used tissues should be binned immediately and hands washed with soap and warm water.

Posters advising this are displayed in the playschool

## **IMMUNISATION**

**The keeping immunisation record for all children attending the service is a legal requirement** (Childcare Act 1991, Early Years Services, 2016)

- Ardfinnan Community Playschool request that all children attending be fully vaccinated prior to starting playschool
- Our Immunisation policy is followed at all times with all children and staff.
- On enrolment, parents are asked for their child's vaccination record, this information is recorded on the child's registration form and a copy of record is available to Tusla for inspection.
- Parents/guardians of children who are not vaccinated are made aware of the dangers of infectious diseases. Parents are encouraged to keep to up to date with current vaccination requirements and to ensure that the service is kept informed and the child's record updated when required.
- Parents/guardians are not required to have their children vaccinated to gain admission to the service but where a child's immunisation record is not up-to-date parents/guardians are encouraged to have their child vaccinated. Where a child is not vaccinated parents/guardians will be asked to sign a form stating their child is not vaccinated and this will be available to Tusla on inspection.
- If a child is not vaccinated, parents/guardians are advised that their children will be excluded from the service during outbreaks of some vaccine preventable diseases such as Measles, Whooping Cough etc., even if their child is well. This is to protect their non-vaccinated child.
- We provide information leaflets on infectious diseases, for parents

(All information regarding a child's vaccination is recorded in confidence and only made available to parents/guardians of the child, on a need-to-know basis for staff and for inspection purposes only)

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that there are a number of reasons why a child may not be vaccinated. Some of these are listed below:

- The child's young age
- Medical contra-indications
- Conscientious or religious objection
- Natural immunity
- The appropriate vaccine is currently unavailable

We will work with parents supporting their choices for their children and offering information on vaccines available.

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DISTRUBITED TO PARENTS WHO WISH NOT TO VACINATE THEIR CHILD:

**ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL  
VACCINATION**

**Principle**

It is the policy of Ardfinnan Community Playschool that eligibility of a child to attend playschool is subject to he/she having received the Health Service recommended immunizations as outlined in the National Childhood Immunization Programme.

This includes the MMR Vaccine.

**Parents' choice**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that parents have a choice to vaccinate their child with this in mind if a child is not vaccinated parents are obliged to inform the service prior to enrolling their child. Before starting playschool parents of children who are not vaccinated are asked to sign our vaccination policy and infectious disease policy to show they are aware of our procedures; this is held in the child's file and a copy is given to the parents.

If a child is not vaccinated parents/guardians are advised that their children will be excused from the service during outbreaks of some vaccine preventable diseases such as Measles, Whooping Cough etc., even if their child is well. This is to protect their non-vaccinated child.

Information on vaccinations is available on <https://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/vaccines-your-child/>

**Parents, please sign the following:**

I/We understand that Ardfinnan Community Playschool may exclude my child from the service during outbreaks of some vaccine preventable diseases to protect my child.

I/We have received a copy of Ardfinnan Community Playschool policy on Infection Control and their Immunisation Policy.

I/We understand the risks associated with my child not being vaccinated

Please state what vaccines your child HAS, if any, received.....

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**HEALTH****ILLNESS****Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool prioritises the health and wellbeing of the children in the service and believes a child needs to be fit and well to benefit from attending the service. If a child is sick at home or becomes ill throughout their day, the service believes the best place for them is at home where they can rest fully and recover.

**Principle**

This policy is underpinned by the Preschool Regulations 2006 and the services Infectious Control Policy

**Illness Policy for Children**

- Children or adults who are sick or who may be a source of infection should not attend the service.
- Parents are advised that a child who has been sick during the night should not attend the service the next day.
- A child with a communicable illness should not attend the service
- All parents are informed if a child attending the service has a communicable illness, (confidentiality is paramount and when informing parents, the identity of the sick child/adult will not be divulged)

**Illness Policy for Staff**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a detailed employment policy which includes a section on Staff Illness. The service recommends that:

- Staff with a communicable illness should not attend the service
- All parents are informed if a member of staff has a communicable illness

**When a child is unwell parents/guardians are asked to keep them at home if they are unable to participate fully in all of the activities of the day and or if there may be a risk of passing the illness to another child or adult in the service**

This is likely if the child has any of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- A temperature of 38° C or 101° F
- Eye discharge
- Rash or skin disorder
- Strep throat
- An earache or a bad cough
- Covid 19
- Flu like symptoms
- Head lice
- Measles Mumps Rubella
- Chicken pox

If a child is ill or becomes ill in the service, we will expect the parent/guardian or a nominated carer to come for their child within 30 minutes

we will do our best to keep a sick child separate from well children

if all attempts at contacting a parent/guardian/carer or authorised person are unsuccessful the next action may have to be to transfer the child to hospital by ambulance.

**Any child ill with fever headache and vomiting must be sent home as soon as their parents/guardians can be contacted.** Parents will be advised to contact their doctor immediately

**If there is significant delay in contacting parents/guardians of the child with fever headache and vomiting CALL THE AMBULANCE and then continue to try to contact the child's parents/guardians. A child with fever headache and vomiting must not be allowed to wait indefinitely in the service**

**In addition to these symptoms children with meningococcal infection often develop a rash that starts as red spots but will progress to purple freckles and blotches and even bruising if this occurs CALL AN AMBULANCE GET MEDICAL ATTENTION first and then contact the parents/guardians**

#### **Exclusion periods for infectious illness**

Ill children and staff should only return when they have recovered.

Listed below are some common communicable diseases and the recommended exclusion times:

*(information gathered from the HSE, Tusla and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre)*

**Diarrhoea and vomiting:** Children who have been vomiting or have had diarrhoea should be excluded for 48 hours after resolution of their symptoms

**A temperature of 38° C or 101° F:** children should stay home until temperature returns to normal and have not had a high temperature or any new symptoms for 48 hours

#### **High Temperature procedures**

- If a child has a suspected temperature, staff take a temperature reading. A temperature of 38 degrees or higher is considered high.
- A number of measures will be used to try reduce the temperature
  - ◆ Firstly, loosen and remove clothing as necessary
  - ◆ Check that the temperature of the room is not too warm
  - ◆ Give tepid sponging and comfort to the child along with reassurance
- the parent will be contacted by means of a phone call, if the child is still unwell after 10 minutes, the parent is asked to collect the child
- The child will be monitored and made comfortable allowing them to rest while waiting for their parent to arrive

**Eye discharge:** exclusion is not generally indicated but in circumstances where spread within the preschool is evident or likely to occur it may be necessary to recommend exclusion of affected children until they recover, or until they have had antibiotics for 48 hours. Children with conjunctivitis are advised to remain at home until symptoms dissipate

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**Covid 19:** Children should stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of Covid 19 and are unwell, have a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or higher) and have tested positive for Covid 19. They should return when they have a negative test and symptoms have dissipated

**Flu like symptoms:** If your child has symptoms of the flu, keep them at home for at least 5 days after their symptoms began. Children can return to playschool 5 days after their symptoms began and they are feeling well enough to participate fully in all activities

**Head lice:** If a child has head lice, parents will be notified at the discretion of the Manager/Supervisor. Parents will be asked to treat their child immediately before returning to preschool the next day. If a child persistently presents with head lice it may be necessary to exclude him/her from the preschool until the condition has been treated. (please see our policy on Headlice)

**Hand foot and mouth disease:** Hand, foot and mouth disease is contagious. While the child is unwell, he/she should be kept away from preschool. If evidence exists of transmission within the preschool exclusion of children until the spots have gone from their hands may be necessary

**Measles:** Children should remain at home while infectious i.e. up to 4 days after the rash appears. Generally, the child will be too ill to attend preschool. In addition, Public Health may recommend additional actions, such as the temporary exclusion of unvaccinated siblings of a case or other unvaccinated children in the preschool who may be incubating measles

**Mumps:** Children should remain at home for 5 days after the onset of swelling

**Rubella:** Children should remain at home for 7 days after onset of the rash, and whilst unwell

**RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus):** Children who have RSV should remain at home until they have no symptoms and their temperature has returned to normal.

**Chicken pox:** Those with chickenpox should not attend preschool until scabs are dry; this is usually 5-7 days after the appearance of the rash.

### **Cleaning and the premises**

- All staff are aware of their role in maintaining high standards of hygiene.
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool encourages best practice regarding keeping the environment and premises clean and safe.
- Spillages of blood, faeces, urine, vomit or other bodily fluids or excretions are cleaned immediately and with priority. Mops are not be used for these and extreme caution is exercised at all times.
- Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning schedules are in place and records kept. Cleaning records are located in each room.
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a contract with a bin removal company for the removal and disposal of all waste

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- Our premises are free from pests and rodents and we have a contract with an external agent who checks our premises regularly.
- We maintain a good stock of cleaning products and tools to ensure that hygiene practices can be carried out at all times. Adequate supplies for cleaning are provided to be used, like clean cloths, gloves, aprons, mops, buckets and detergents. Cleaning products and supplies are stored in a locked press that is not accessible to children.
- Toys and play materials are cleaned after each session, with attention placed on especially soiled items. Toys are not brought into toilet areas.
- Toilets, floors, shelves storing bags, tables and chairs and other areas are cleaned after each session to help decrease the spread of infection,
- Any soiled clothes are placed in a plastic bag, sealed and sent home with parents/guardians, parents and guardians are informed at collection if clothes being sent home are soiled.
- At least once a day, even in winter, all rooms in the service are aired out.
- All staff receive regular support & supervision in relation to infection control and training is provided

(Please see our cleaning policy for more information)

### **Animals and pets**

- Hand washing and drying procedures are followed before and after handling any animals and pets that are present in Ardfinnan Community Playschool or that we meet on outings.
- Children are supervised with animals at all times.
- All animals visiting Ardfinnan Community Playschool are regularly checked with vets

### **Outbreak of an infectious disease**

- Staff are aware of diseases classified as notifiable diseases by the Department of Public Health, a list is also available from the HSE.
- When Ardfinnan Community Playschool is informed by the Department of Public Health of a diagnosis of a child attending the service or an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service, as suffering from an infectious disease, the service will notify the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate by filling out the *Notification of Incidents Form*
- Ardfinnan Community Playschool will contact the Department of Public Health if there is a concern about a communicable disease or infection or if there is an outbreak of infectious disease in the service. The Department of Public Health will also be contacted before sending letters to par-ents/guardians about an infectious disease. The advice of the Department of Public Health will be followed at all times in regard to the management of infectious diseases.
- Parents will be informed verbally and in writing if an outbreak has occurred – all reasonable information on the outbreak will be provided to them.

### **When to contact the local Department of Public Health:**

- If there is a concern about a communicable disease or infection or advice is needed on controlling them
- If there is a concern that the number of children who have developed similar symptoms is higher than normal
- If there is an outbreak of infectious disease in the service
- To check whether to exclude a child or member of staff

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- Before sending letters to parents/guardians about an infectious disease

A risk assessment will be undertaken by management prior to notifying parents and the Department.

### Communication plan for Parents and Staff members

At the beginning of each school year, all staff will be notified of all new policies which may have been implemented.

All parents are notified of all policies upon enrolling their child at Ardfinnan Community Playschool and any updates are also communicated throughout the school year.

A summary of this policy is included in the Parents Handbook

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

## HEALTH

# ALLERGIES

### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool prioritises the health and wellbeing of the children attending our playschool and pays particular attention to any child with severe allergies. This policy outlines the management of the special care required by such children and the role of parents in ensuring the safety of their child

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that preschool allergies are serious and we, as early childhood educators, take them seriously.

### Principle

This policy is underpinned by the Preschool Regulations 2006 and LINC

### Procedures for Children with Allergies

#### Enrolment

When parents enrol their children at Ardfinnan Community Playschool they are asked if their child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the registration form. The parents then meet with our Lead Educator to discuss the steps needed to support their child while attending our playschool, and how we can make our playschool an allergy free place for their child.

#### Risk Assessment

If a child has an allergy, a risk assessment is completed by the parent and the Lead Educator to detail the following:

- The allergen (i.e., the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc).
- The nature of the allergic reactions e.g., anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc
- What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g., EpiPen).
- Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen.
- This form is kept in the child's personal file and a copy is displayed where staff can see it with parental permission.

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- Parents train staff in how to administer special medication in the event of an allergic reaction. In some instances, it may be necessary for staff to have specialist training for the administration of medication, this will be provided for by management.

### Life Saving Medication and Invasive Treatments

In the case of, adrenaline injections (EpiPens) for anaphylactic shock reactions (caused by allergies to nuts, eggs etc.) or invasive treatments such as rectal administration of Diazepam (for epilepsy) the following applies;

The Lead Educator must have:

- A letter from the child's GP/consultant stating the child's condition and what medication if any is to be administered
- Written consent from the parent or guardian allowing staff to administer medication
- Proof of training in the administration of such medication by the child's GP, a district nurse, children's nurse specialist or a community paediatric nurse or official training programme
- A copy of such proof may be required by our insurance provider for appraisal so that our insurance can be extended if necessary

### Confidentiality

Only those persons who provide care to the child will be informed of the child's allergy. Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that each family has a right to confidentiality; management will inform parents on enrolment of our confidentiality policy.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool understands that in some instances e.g., food allergy, dog allergy, it is necessary to inform all parents to ensure that the allergen can be eliminated from our preschool and their help in doing this is vital to the safety of the child.

**Ardfinnan Community Playschool will inform ALL parents if there are allergies in our preschool but we will NOT let parents know who has allergies.**

### Symptoms

**If ANY symptoms of allergies are present, contact the family immediately.**

**If any of the symptoms are severe (affecting breathing, causing pain, or numbness/swelling, itchiness in face), call 911 and then the family.**

**Environmental Allergies:** Symptoms can vary depending on the child and on the allergy.

The most common symptoms of environmental allergies are sneezing; coughing; runny nose and/or congestion; itchy eyes, throat and/or nose; wheezing and shortness of breath (for those who also have asthma).

**Food Allergies:** Symptoms vary from child to child and food allergy to food allergy and range from mild to severe. Symptoms can include some or all of the symptoms listed above for environmental allergies; hives, itchy rashes; stomach problems such as vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach (abdominal) pain, nausea. Some severe symptoms include itchy, swelling of lips (and tongue and throat) --signs of anaphylaxis

### Birthday Parties

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Birthdays are an important milestone for all children and at Ardfinnan Community Playschool we always mark the occasion with a small party. If parents wish to bring in any food items such as a birthday cake or sweets, they are welcome to do so but must ensure that food items are wrapped in original store packaging noting expiry dates and all ingredients. Parents must also comply with any allergy restrictions that are in place at that time, e.g., no nuts, eggs or gluten procedure.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is also very mindful of different faiths and their recognition and celebration of birthdays and will always contact parents prior to celebrating any occasion.

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## HEALTH

# SAFE REST AND SLEEP POLICY

### **Principle**

This policy is underwritten by Regulation 10 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016; Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child; Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play; Regulation 23 Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child; Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 29 Premises.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognise the importance of sleep and rest for all children, ensuring that each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet a child's needs should he/she require some rest and relaxation. The service also provides space within its playroom for a child who may want to sleep. Ardfinnan Community Playschool will ensure that the safety and comfort of the child is paramount at all times.

### **Children need:**

- Access to appropriate, safe and comfortable rest and/or sleep area within the playroom.
- To be able to rest or sleep safely and comfortably whenever they need to.
- Children have a quiet space to enjoy unstructured, quiet activities of their choice (example, read a book, listen to music) or have a rest with soft seating and matting areas to sit or lie down.
- Children will be offered a pillow/cushion if they want to rest or sleep
- Children can sleep on mats or sofas in the play room where they are normally accommodated once the needs of all children in the room are met.
- Quiet activities are organised in another section of the room for children who are not sleeping or resting

### **Parents/guardians need to:**

- Know that their child will be able to rest in a safe and comfortable environment according to their individual needs.
- To be assured that their child will have access to a clean, safe and appropriately supervised relaxation area that is free of risks and hazards.
- Be assured that if any incident arises in relation to the wellbeing of their child while they are resting or sleeping, all appropriate measures will be taken by the service to protect their child and to notify them at the earliest possible time.

### **All staff members need:**

- To know and understand clearly their roles and responsibilities in relation to providing appropriately for children's individual needs for safe sleep and/or rest in an area that is clean and free of risks and hazards.

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- Absolute clarity on their roles and responsibilities in relation to supervising and ensuring children's safety while they rest or sleep and also on what they must do should any child be found to be unresponsive or not breathing.
- Children are always supervised when sleeping.

#### Management needs to:

- Ensure that the legal requirement to have an appropriate safe sleep and rest policy is met.
- To know that all staff team members know their roles and responsibilities and have the clarity that they need to ensure that all children's needs for safe and comfortable rest and/or sleep are met according to best practice guidelines.
- To ensure that all necessary and appropriate safety measures and procedures are clearly outlined in the policy and procedures.

#### Procedure for managing an emergency if a sleeping child is unresponsive:

1. First aid is administered, and the emergency services are contacted.
2. The Lead Educator or the person who is in charge at that time notifies the child's parents/guardians as soon as possible of the current situation.
3. The person who found the child and has been resuscitating the child gives a detailed account of events to the paramedics on their arrival.
4. Staff follow the direction of the paramedical staff.
5. The scene is to be left as it is. An Garda Síochána may need to investigate.
6. Families of the other children attending the childcare service may need to be notified of the incident by the Manager.
7. Staff support is essential following any such incident

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## HEALTH

# SETTLING IN

### Principle

The Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and The Department of Education and Skills: NCCA national template for transition from preschool to school and Síolta Standard 13

Ardfinnan Community Playschool Settling in policy means that procedures are in place to support each child's emotional wellbeing and transition from home to playschool when they first attend our service and to continue that support as they progress from playschool to primary. It ensures that there is sensitive planning and management between our playschool and parents to ensure positive experiences as a child begins their educational journey.

### Statement

We recognise that successful experiences during early transitions can increase a child's ability to adapt to changes in the future and can provide a more secure base for their learning and development. We work to develop strong relationships between the family and the service through frequent communication and sharing of information and goals.

We aim to provide relationships and routines that are consistent, predictable, and responsive to support each child's sense of trust, security, and identity.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool believes that children need to feel safe, stimulated and happy to develop and grow socially emotionally and physically, they need to feel secure and comfortable with their educators. Parents also need to have confidence in both their children's wellbeing and play an active part in their child's settling at our playschool by saying goodbye and telling their child when and who is collecting them.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool always:

- Consider transitions from the perspective of the wellbeing, learning and development needs of each child.
- Build partnerships with families to support the development of responsive, respectful relationships among children and staff.
- Individualise routines and practices to support each child's needs, interests, temperament, their own and their family's circumstances and their preferences, their culture and first language.
- Use routines and transitions as opportunities to promote children's learning and development.
- Plan for transitions and placements that provide consistency and continuity for children and their families.
- Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of transitions using various means, including observations of the children and feedback from their families.
- Support parents in being or becoming advocates as they transition with their children both into this service from home or other settings [such as a child-minder] and from this service to other settings, especially primary school.
- Ensure the most appropriate transition to other environments and services from participation in this service by beginning transition planning as early as possible prior to the child's move.
- Liaise with other settings appropriately and provide any relevant information (via parents or with parents' consent) that is helpful in ensuring a successful transition from this service to primary school.

We use the national template (NCCA, 2018) for transfer of information from this setting to primary school.

### **Open Evening**

Prior to starting their journey at Ardfinnan Community Playschool each child is invited to our open evening, where they can spend some time with their parents in our service. For children joining the service midyear, they are invited in to meet with staff at any time so their child can see our playschool and familiarise themselves with our playroom. Parents are encouraged to point to the child sized furniture, explaining that it is just for children and emphasising that only the child will have great fun playing with all the toys.

Parents are given the opportunity to meet all staff members, to chat about the routine of our playschool day, to have any questions answered, to view our curriculum and to fill in our Enrolment Form.

### **First Day of Playschool**

Parents are encouraged to leave their child as quickly as possible as the children usually find it distressing if too many unexpected strangers (and other children's parents are unexpected strangers to a small child) hang around.

Parents are of course welcome to stay for the first 30 minutes if their child is unsettled. They may also wait in the garden for a time to ensure their child is settling well. Parents are welcome to phone at any time during the session and staff will contact parents if a child becomes unduly upset.

There are a number of strategies to help your child settle in our playschool these can be discussed with staff to ensure best care for your child and their time with us. These may include:

- a) Visiting the playschool prior to your child starting school, explaining to him/her what their day at playschool will include focusing on fun and friendship
- b) Gradually building up the time your child attends playschool
- c) Using the educators' names when speaking about playschool to your child so as they are familiar with staff when they arrive at playschool
- d) Encourage your child's confidence and independence by praising them when dropping and collecting them

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Please be assured many of the staff are parents too and understand parent's apprehension on this big occasion. We will strive to ensure that your child is as happy and as nurtured as possible while in our care.

### Transitioning to Primary School

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that transitioning to "big school" can be a little scary for children, with this in mind our educators have built a relationship with our local primary schools, inviting teachers and principals to visit our playschool to meet with the children, pictures of the schools, their uniforms are posted on our walls for the children. There are information sheets available for parents to help them through the process and staff are available to talk with parents about their child's needs going forward to primary school.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool also uses Mo Scéal the national template (NCCA, 2018) for transfer of information from this setting to primary school. Staff also liaise with teachers and other specialists e.g., speech therapist, occupational therapist, to ensure the smooth transition from playschool to primary for all children.

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## HEALTH

# SUN PROTECTION

### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool's sun protection policy has been developed to ensure that all children are protected from damaging levels of UVR from the sun. We recognise that children's skin is extremely sensitive at this young age and this policy must be carefully considered throughout the whole year but especially during the warmer months of April, May, June and September.

### Sun Protection Procedure

- Children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears from the sun. Parents are expected to provide hats.
- It is recommended that water resistant SPF 50+, broad spectrum sunscreen is applied before the child attends playschool
- Parents must provide sunscreen for their child; the sunscreen must be clearly labelled if the child needs to top up their sun cream before going outside. Staff encourage the children to be independent putting on their own sun cream with the help of staff
- Children in direct sunlight should use shade whenever possible.
- Children are provided with regular fluid, their drinks bottles are stored in the playroom where the children have access to throughout the day, a jug of water and plastic glasses are also available
- Staff adhere to the Hand Hygiene Policy between each child's sunscreen applications and encourages each child to wash after applying cream where necessary.

### Sunscreen Application

Parental consent is required when a sunscreen supplied by the service is used. When providing consent parents are informed of the exact brand and type of sunscreen used by Ardfinnan Community Playschool.

Sunscreen supplied by parents does not require consent. Sunscreen supplied by parents is labelled with the child's name and is only used for that child.

Sunscreen is stored out of children's reach and labelled with the date it was first opened.

Sunscreen is brought on outings as needed.

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**HEALTH****HEAD LICE****Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that it is always possible to catch head lice, no matter how careful we are. Children can pick up head lice just by coming into close contact with someone who is infected. This policy states the importance of how to recognise the problem early and to know how to deal with it.

**Principle**

This policy is underpinned by Child Care Act 1991, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook 2011

**Procedures**

- All staff will be given training on how to recognise Head Lice
- All staff will inform other parents verbally or in writing in the event of an outbreak of Head Lice. Staff should be tactful and maintain confidentiality.
- Staff should inform parents to check their child's hair carefully and regularly, and to use the treatment recommended by the public health nurse, chemist, doctor or local health clinic.
- Staff will talk to the children on the importance of not sharing other people's combs, hats etc. this is also stressed to parents.
- A child with a confirmed case of Head Lice is advised to remain at home until the infection is brought under control
- Parents are asked to contact the playschool and inform them if their child has Head Lice (this information is shared with other parents but names are kept confidential)

**If more advice is needed, the service will contact the public health nurse.**

**SAFETY****SAFETY STATEMENT****ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL --HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT**

We at ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, employees and all those affected by its activities and in compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare Work Act, 2005 and the associated General Application Regulations 2007, which set out how the prevention of ill-health and accidents at work is to be achieved.

We understand that we have the ultimate responsibility for the workplace and a direct influence on health and safety in our business. The health and safety policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that the workplace is as safe and healthy as reasonably practicable and that all relevant health and safety legislation is complied with.

**SAFETY POLICY**

We are committed to fulfilling our statutory obligations to manage and co-ordinate workplace safety and health and ensuring, so as far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- Work activities are managed so as to ensure the safety, health and welfare of our employees

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- The safety statement is maintained and updated, risk assessments are carried out and reviewed as required and brought to the attention of all employees at least annually
- Identified protective and preventive measures are implemented and maintained
- Improper conduct likely to put an employee's safety and health at risk is prevented
- A safe place of work is provided, which is adequately designed and maintained
- A safe means of access and egress is provided
- Safe equipment are provided
- Safe systems of work are provided
- Risks to health from any article or substance are prevented
- Appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision are provided
- Where hazards cannot be eliminated, adequate arrangements, including the provision of suitable protective clothing and equipment, will be put in place to reduce the risk of injury
- Emergency plans are prepared and revised
- Welfare facilities are provided and adequately maintained
- Competent personnel to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of our employees are employed when required.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool considers that it is the strict duty of all staff to conform to child care safety policies and practices and to carry out their responsibilities as detailed in this document and in accordance with any other relevant legislation.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool welcomes feedback from staff or service users regarding any aspect of this document or any other health and safety concerns. Feedback in this regard should be directed to management and Lead Educator (named below).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Erica Condon** (Lead Educator)

## SAFETY

# RISK MANAGEMENT

### Statement

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool, we are committed to safeguarding children, staff, parents and all visitors to our Early Years' Service. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure that we are providing a safe place for children, staff, parents, and visitors to be.

### Principle

The Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 Regulation 10, Regulation 14 and Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005

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This policy applies to all staff members and all service activities.

Regular risk assessments are carried out to identify risks to: any child attending the service; their parents while accessing the service; any adult working in the service; or any visitors to the service in relation to:

- The governance of the service
- The health, safety and welfare of each individual
- The safety of the service
- The premises being safe, suitable and appropriate for care and education of children.

Risk is part of everyday life in every Early Years' Service and is something that our staff are well accustomed to responding to. All staff members ensure they have considered all potential hazards that may occur during a session, on an outing or during children's play activities.

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we provide the children with a risk rich environment which enables them to access and take risks in their play. We allow them to make choices, test their limits, meet challenges, explore boundaries and learn from the risks they take. We follow the guidelines of Aistear and Síolta in providing the children with opportunities to challenge themselves with hands on experiences. These experiences are guided by mindful staff who have previously observed the children and are aware of their abilities.

### Responsibility

All staff members have a duty of care in detecting and dealing with potential risks while the Lead Educator has ultimate responsibility for ensuring proper risk management and procedure. All staff and volunteers will be aware of our Risk Management Policy and will act accordingly with procedures to ensure a safe environment for all.

### Procedures

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a 5-step procedure when accessing and dealing with hazards and risks

**Step 1: identify the hazard**-- Walk around the playschool each morning prior to opening; ensure all staff are involved in risk assessment.

**Step 2: identify who is at risk and how**-- Can children, staff, visitors be harmed or injured

**Step 3: what procedures are already in existence** -- What measures can we put in place to reduce the risk of harm or injury

**Step 4: what further action is needed to ensure we have reduced the risk as far as is reasonably practical** -- Having identified the hazards or risks you are required to protect the children from harm by identifying measures to reduce or eliminate hazard or risk.

**Step 5: what action will/was taken** -- Prioritise hazards and deal with high-risk first, all findings should be written down and recorded, showing that you have identified the hazards, decided who could be harmed and how and also show how you plan to eliminate the risk or hazard. Whomever has identified the risk and dealt with it must document it.

### Records Management and Review

All risk assessments completed are documented, recorded and reviewed annually or more frequently if warranted.

Risk management records are kept in line with our Record Keeping Policy and our Risk Management system is reviewed as part of our annual review.

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**SAFETY****FIRE SAFETY****Statement**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we do everything necessary to ensure that all reasonable measures for fire prevention and fire safety are taken.

We have a nominated Fire Safety Officer (this is a member of staff who is assigned responsibility for the implementation and overseeing fire safety in the service). Our Fire Safety Officer is appropriately trained. All staff members are trained in fire prevention and fire safety procedures and practices. Each individual staff member understands their role and responsibilities in relation to the fire safety measures in the service.

**Regulations Governing our Fire Policy**

The Fire Services Act, 1981, with reference to Fire Safety in Preschools 1999, The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, Regulation 10, Regulation 23 and regulation 26 and The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

Ardfinnan Community Playschool takes all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire and in the event of a fire occurring ensure as is reasonably practicable the safety of the staff and children on the premises. Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises that:

**Children need:**

- The adults who are responsible for their safety to be appropriately prepared for dealing with the risk of fire.
- The adults to be absolutely clear on all aspects of fire safety, the service's approach to fire safety and their responsibilities for ensuring the children's safety.

**Parents/guardians need:**

- To be absolutely clear on what the service does to prevent fire, to ensure that any fire would be quickly detected and to ensure that their child will be prepared for an emergency evacuation and will be safely evacuated from the building should an alarm sound or a fire occur.
- To know that they will be contacted at the earliest opportunity in the event of any fire occurring at the service.

**All staff members need:**

- To know clearly and precisely what is required of them in relation to their specific responsibilities to help prevent fire occurring, to ensure that any fire will be detected quickly; to prepare the children for emergency evacuation and to ensure that everyone is safely evacuated from the building should an alarm sound or a fire occur.
- To be clear on the procedure for informing parents/guardians.
- To be familiar with the location of fire-fighting equipment.
- To be clear on what must be recorded, who is responsible for recording it and how.
- Very clear and precise written step-by-step procedural guidance to help them with correctly implementing this policy

**Management needs to ensure that:**

- All of the legislative and regulatory requirements relating to fire safety are adequately and appropriately met.

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- All staff team members are provided with clear and precise information on what their individual responsibilities are in relation to fire prevention.
- Any fire can be detected quickly; to prepare the children for any emergency evacuation and to safely evacuate everyone from the building should an alarm sound or a fire occur.
- All staff members are clear on their responsibilities in relation to monitoring, reviewing and record keeping including what must be recorded and how.
- A Fire Safety Officer is nominated, appropriately trained and is clear on the role and responsibilities.

### Procedure

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has implemented the following policy regarding Fire Drills and Evacuation procedures. All staff must be familiar with these procedures and the designated Fire Safety Officer be suitably trained.

#### Staff are advised to know the following:

- Be aware of fire drill and have practiced same on a regular basis with the children in playschool
- Be aware of location of the fire extinguishers
- Know how to use the extinguishers
- Know the location of all exit doors
- Be familiar with how to open the exit doors

#### In the event of the discovery of fire:

- Know how to raise the alarm and summon help
- Close doors in the area of the fire. This helps to prevent the spread of fire and smoke throughout the building

#### Evacuation in the event of fire:

- On hearing the fire alarm – direct all children to the nearest safe exit Assistants first and Playschool Leader last carrying the emergency pack and roll book to ensure all children have left building
- Report any fire hazards you are aware of to the manager or fire officer

### EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a 4-step approach to Emergency Evacuations, all staff are asked to familiarise themselves with these procedures.

Fire drill to be held once a month in playschool to make children and staff aware of the procedure extended Fire Drill to be held twice a year: Recommended October and February.

#### FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT 1

*Located in the playground behind the slide*

#### Upon hearing the fire alarm, please follows these directions

1. On hearing the alarm, adults will calmly line up children to leave by appointed exit.
2. All children to be lead from building by assistant play leader who immediately checks the role books to see that all children are at the appointed place of safety
3. Physically challenged children will be provided assistance to help exit the building
4. The Lead Educator to leave last, ensuring that all rooms are empty and closing all doors and windows if it is safe to do so.
5. The Lead Educator to bring Emergency Pack which contains all parents contact details
6. The Fire Service is contacted as promptly as possible, phone 999 or 112

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7. A decision is made if it is safe to stay at Fire Assembly Point 1 or is there relevant danger to move to another Assembly Point.
8. Appointed member of staff (usually the Fire Safety Officer) to provide Fire Brigade service with necessary information on arrival.
9. In the event of fire, staff will inform an officer of Ardfinnan Childcare committee as soon as practicable

### **FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT 2**

*Located at the front gate of the playschool*

**In the event of a fire or evacuation of the building and parents are called to collect their child, Assembly Point 2 will be the designated collection point unless otherwise stated by Playschool Leader.**

Follow guidelines for evacuation to Assembly point 1

- On hearing the alarm, adults will calmly line up children to leave by appointed exit.
- All children to be lead from building by assistant play leader who immediately checks the role books to see that all children are at the appointed place of safety
- Physically challenged children will be provided assistance to help exit the building
- The Lead Educator o leave last, ensuring that all rooms are empty and closing all doors and windows if it is safe to do so.
- The Lead Educator to bring Emergency Pack and mobile phone which contains all parents contact details
- The Fire Service is contacted as promptly as possible, phone 999 or 112

**A decision to move to Assembly Point 2 is made by the Fire Officer**

- All children are led from Assembly Point 1 to Assembly Point 2 where a second roll call is made by Assistant Leader
- The Lead Educator to contact all parents informing them of the evacuation and advising them on where to collect their child
- All staff to remain with children at all times
- No parent to take their child without notifying playschool leader
- No persons to enter playschool building until a thorough safety check has been done by experienced qualified persons.

If a decision is made to evacuate the premises, then the Lead Educator issues each child and adult with a hi-vis jacket from the emergency pack and follows procedures to evacuate to Assembly Point 3 or 4.

### **FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT 3**

*Located in the green area in front of the playschool*

**In the event of a full-scale evacuation of Playschool staff will use the contents of the Emergence Pack to ensure the safety of each child and adult in the Service**

Following guidelines for evacuation to Assembly Point 1...

- On hearing the alarm, adults will calmly line up children to leave by appointed exit.
- Physically challenged children will be provided assistance to help exit the building
- All children to be lead from building by assistant play leader who immediately checks the role books to see that all children are at the appointed place of safety
- The Lead Educator o leave last, ensuring that all rooms are empty and closing all doors and windows if it is safe to do so.

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- The Lead Educator to bring Emergency Pack and mobile phone which contains all parents contact details
- The Fire Service is contacted as promptly as possible, phone 999 or 112

**The Safety Officer makes the decision to move to a safer Assembly Point following these guidelines.**

- Each child and adult are issued with a high visual jacket.
- A rope is employed and each child holds the rope with one adult at the top and one at the end with other adults guiding the children in the centre as they walk.
- Staff to remain calm so as not to distress the children more
- The leader of the rope walks to Assembly Point 3
- Upon contacting parents, the Lead Educator will advise where to collect their child
- A temporary Fire Assembly Sign will be placed at point 3
- All staff to remain with children at all times
- No parent to take their child without notifying the Lead Educator

#### **FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT 4**

*Located in the village church, Main Street Ardfinnan*

**This Assembly Point 4 is used in extreme cases such as gas leak, violent treats or severe weather where having the children outside is not safe. It is the decision of the Safety Officer to evacuate all children and adults to Assembly Point 4.**

Following guidelines for evacuation to Assembly Point 1...

- On hearing the alarm, adults will calmly line up children to leave by appointed exit.
- Physically challenged children will be provided assistance to help exit the building
- All children to be lead from building by assistant play leader who immediately checks the role books to see that all children are at the appointed place of safety
- The Lead Educator to leave last, ensuring that all rooms are empty and closing all doors and windows if it is safe to do so.
- The Lead Educator to bring Emergency Pack and mobile phone which contains all parents contact details
- The Fire Service is contacted as promptly as possible, phone 999 or 112

**In the event of a full-scale evacuation of Playschool staff will use the contents of the Emergence Pack to ensure the safety of each child and adult in the Service**

- Each child and adult is issued with a high visual jacket.
- A rope is employed and each child holds the rope with one adult at the top and one at the end with other adults guiding the children in the centre as they walk.
- Staff to remain calm so as not to distress the children more
- The leader of the rope walks to Assembly Point 4
- Upon contacting parents, the Lead Educator will advise where to collect their child
- A temporary Fire Assembly Sign will be placed at point 4
- All staff to remain with children at all times
- No parent to take their child without notifying the Lead Educator

#### **FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE SHEET**

**Hazard:** smoke inhalation, burns, death

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**Controls:** the building is protected by a fire detection and alarm system. If a fire is detected raise the alarm by breaking the glass in the nearest break glass, if there is no automatic fire alarm or if the automatic fire alarm has not already done so.

**Fire Fighting Equipment:** fire extinguishers and fire blankets are fitted throughout the building. Staff will be aware of their location and how to use them. Firefighting and detection systems must be well maintained and serviced at regular intervals by competent personnel.

All staff and children must participate in evacuation drills at least once a month

### Prevention

Flammable liquids and gases must be used only in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and any fire hazard warning noted

A no-smoking policy applies to this service and must be strictly adhered to.

Keep all exits clear

The discharge of a fire extinguisher must be reported to the Fire Officer immediately and replaced

Ensure items in storage are stocked in a tidy manner away from sources of heat. Do not store flammable items in the vicinity of a stairway

A high standard of housekeeping must be maintained to prevent an accumulation of litter and waste

Report any defects noted in equipment relating to potential fire hazards e.g. broken/worn wiring, equipment over-heating, overloaded sockets etc.

Care must be taken to ensure that there are no sources of heat or ignition in an area where refuse is being stored prior to collection

Radiant electrical fire must not be used and must be taken out of service

All employees must be aware of their individual responsibilities in relation to fire safety and action to be the event of a fire occurring

### FIRE SAFETY ADVIE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

All staff are advised to know the following:

1. What to do in the event of discovery of a fire
2. Location of the extinguishers and the fire blankets
3. How to use the extinguishers and the fire blankets
4. Location of all exit doors
5. Be familiar with how to open the exit doors

In the event of the discovery of fire:

6. Know how to raise the alarm and summon help
7. Close doors in the area of the fire. This helps to prevent the spread of fire and smoke throughout the building

Evacuation in the event of fire:

8. Direct all children and visitors to leave the building by the nearest safe exit.
9. Familiarise yourself with the evacuation plans upon commencing work.
10. Report any fire hazards you are aware of to the manager

If you are unaware, or need further clarification on any matter relating to fire, please seek advice from the manager

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**EMERGENCE PACK**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool will use this emergence pack in line with our Fire Safety and with all other relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

**CONTENTS**

- ❖ 25 high visual jackets child size
- ❖ 5 high visual jackets adult size
- ❖ Rope
- ❖ Portable Fire Assembly Point sign
- ❖ Up to date list of all children and their contact details including emergency contact details
- ❖ Up to date list of all staff and their contact details including emergency contact details
- ❖ Up to date name and contact details of relevant committee members
- ❖ First Aid Kit which include any specific medication which may be needed in times of emergencies for some children i.e., EpiPen

The Emergency Pack will be checked by staff each term to ensure it is up to date and ready for any incident.

**Emergency Pack check list**

Contents	Date checked	Signed	Date checked	Signed	Date checked	Signed
Child hi vis (25)						
Adult hi vis (5)						
Rope						
First Aid Kit						
Children contact details						
Adult contact details						
Committee contact details						

**SAFETY****MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURE****Statement of intent**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool, it is our intention to maintain children's safety as the highest priority at all times both on & off the premises

**Our Aim**

We aim to ensure that every attempt is made, through carrying out the outing's procedure & the arrival and collection procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

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## Method

If a child goes missing from our Early Years' Service

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The supervisor talks to staff to establish when & where the child was last seen & records this.
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the Gardaí.
- The supervisor contacts the manager and reports the incident.

If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the setting ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- Management is informed, if they is not on the outing, and makes their way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the Gardaí as well as support staff.
- The Gardaí are contacted and the child reported as missing.
- The person in charge of our Playschool contacts the child's parent who makes their way to the Playschool or outing venue as agreed with the person in charge.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the Playschool
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the Gardaí if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts the chairperson of the board of management who comes down to the Playschool as soon as possible.

## The investigation

- Staff keep calm & do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The manager/committee chairperson carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- The key person/ staff writes an incident report detailing
  - the date and time of the report;
  - what staff/ children were in the group/outing;
  - when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
  - what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
  - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
  - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a Garda investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the Gardaí will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff.
- Túsla may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

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- The Insurance provider is informed.

### Managing people

Part of managing the incident is to try and keep everyone as calm as possible.

- Staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves & their feelings of anxiety & distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Management needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not only treated fairly but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry & fraught. They may want to blame staff & may single out one staff member over others. When dealing with a distraught parent, there should always be 2 staff members. Aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated & the Gardaí should be called.
- The other children may too be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs & must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the outcome, staff may need counselling & support.

**Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.**

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### SAFETY

## OUTINGS

### Principle

Following the guidance of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, Regulation 10, Ardfinnan Community Playschool has developed an Outings Policy ensuring that where children attending the service are brought on outings the welfare of the participating children is paramount and a detailed risk assessment is carried out prior to all outings.

Outings are an important part of Ardfinnan Community Playschool's pre-school calendar. It is important for children to experience different environments and play experiences. This policy ensures that procedures are in place to protect the children who are participating.

### Planning an outing

#### Risk Assessment

- Has a risk assessment of the outing destination been carried out by the manager or competent person in charge of the outing before an outing takes place?
- Has the outcome of the risk assessment made it necessary to consider an alternative route or venue?
- Has a checklist been developed for the outing?

#### Consent

- Have Parents given written consent before every outing?

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- Have the forms been signed and returned to the service before the outing date?
- Has each parent been informed of the destination, method of travel, times of departure and expected time of arrival back?
- Has consent been obtained for a group photo?

Does the Consent form state the following:

- The number of children going on the outing.
- The number of staff, Parents and other adults going on the outing.

### Responsibilities

- Is every staff member aware of their responsibilities for e.g., roll call, head counts, dealing with accidents/incidents and co-coordinating responses to any critical incident that may arise on the outing e.g., search and stay on site in the event that a child goes missing?
- Is each staff member clearly aware of their role/responsibilities during the outing?
- If parents are attending, are they aware of their role/responsibilities during the outing?
- Has a check list been compiled for the outing?
- Are children prepared for the outing destination? E.g., have appropriate clothing, sunscreen, or provided with any other item deemed necessary.
- Are staff aware of Ardfinnan Community Playschools Missing Child policy
- Are staff familiar with procedures to deal with any critical incidents e.g., choking, drowning etc.

### Insurance

- Is there adequate insurance for each child going on the outing?

### Adult/Child ratio

Ardfinnan Community Playschool adheres to proper adult/child ratio at all times.

- Adult/Child ratio will be increased where necessary, recommending parents fill out this role
- All additional adults will be supervised by staff at all times

### Management of outing

The children will be supervised at all times

Each adult will be briefed of their role prior to going on the outing

Frequent head counts/roll calls will be carried out during the course of the outing

Children will be easily identified by their hi-vis jackets

### First Aid

The staff member in charge will carry a first aid bag, relevant phone numbers of emergency contacts of children attending the outing, a charged mobile phone at all times in case of an emergence

All staff hold an up to date first aid certificate

Details of a child/children who have medical issues including allergies are known to the staff member in charge of the outing

### Other

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Parents and children are informed prior to the outing as to what suitable clothing is required, sun cream, hats and coats, etc.

Parents and children are also informed if the children need to bring their lunch

Parents are also reminded of our Social Media policy on sharing photos

## **SAFETY**

# **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

### **Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children and staff attending our setting at all times. This policy addresses the situation where employees are unable to work or the service has to close due to weather-related circumstances outside of our control. At all times safety considerations will be paramount

### **Procedures**

Measures to be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of children

- Detailed checks are regularly carried out to ensure that children's safety is prioritised
- We will adhere to government advice and any weather warnings
- We will undertake a detailed risk assessment to identify whether there are any hazards for children in relation to travel, building, and compliance with regulations.
- Depending on the outcome of our Risk Assessment we will consider whether it is necessary to close the service
- We will implement a Communications Plan to ensure that all staff and parents are kept informed as events unfold and to ensure there is no unnecessary travel or risk taken
- We have a procedure in place to contact parents at short notice

### **Communication to parents**

Once a decision has been taken to close the service, parents will be informed as soon as possible so they can make alternative arrangements. Parents and staff will be kept informed as events unfold to ensure there is no unnecessary travel. Staff will be informed by phone call and/or the playschool viber account. Parents will be informed by phone call and/or through our parent Facebook messenger.

Parents will be informed that this decision was taken in light of our risk assessment on the health and safety of children and our ability to comply with Regulations.

### **Management of staff absences due to inclement weather**

In the event that the decision was taken to close the service a communication plan will be implemented to ensure that all staff are aware of the implications of this decision.

As the service will be closed staff are advised to stay at home

The policy set out in the staff contracts will be applied and communicated to staff

The management will act as reasonable as possible given the circumstances

In the case that employees are not to come in or to leave early, then employees should be paid as normal for that day(s)

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Where our service remains open and employees are unable to attend due to safety concerns or because they need to take care of children who are off school, then staff will be informed which of the following options will apply:

- Pay employees as normal
- Allow employees to take the missed time from their paid annual leave entitlement
- Agree that employees can make up the missed time at a later date
- Allow employees to use time in lieu

If a staff member is unavailable to work because their child's school or crèche is closed this is an emergency leave situation. However, this does not fall under the legal definition of force majeure leave. Where the staff member is unable to arrange alternative childcare annual leave or unpaid leave should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Unexcused Absence**

Where an employee fails to attend for work and does not notify the manager then this will be dealt with as an unexplained absence and will be dealt with under the service's policy on staff absence.

### **Review and Evaluation -After each event**

The Management and staff of Ardfinnan Community Playschool will review and evaluate each event after it has taken place to ensure that all safety measures and procedures were conducted and contributed to the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and parents attending. Outcomes of these reviews will be recorded and policies and procedures will be updated as appropriate

## **SAFETY**

# **CRITICAL INCIDENT PREPARDNESS PLAN**

### **Definition of Critical Incident**

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the playschool

### **Statement**

Emergency situations usually come with little or no warning and can lead to confusion and devastation. The purpose of this plan is to address basic emergency planning and response for a range of emergencies which may occur at our Service.

### **Aim**

The aim of this plan is to provide guidance to our staff on the prevention of and effective response to a critical incident. Its purpose is to facilitate our service to

- minimize the risks of a critical incident occurring;
- have an effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur;
- identify appropriate support and counselling structures in the event of an incident;
- Identify and implement appropriate training and information resources for staff.

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**Principle**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool's Critical Incident Preparedness Plan is written in accordance with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2016.

**Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency preparedness is the preparation and planning necessary to effectively handle a critical incident. The goal of these preparedness activities is to make sure that Ardfinnan Community Playschool is ready and able to respond quickly and effectively in the event of a critical incident. All staff, committee members will understand and be able to activate the Critical Incident Preparedness Plan, parents will also be aware of it through our hand book. The following are sample emergency situations where our Critical Incident Preparedness Plan will be implemented:

- Medical Emergencies,
- Missing Child, (see missing child policy and procedures)
- Natural Disasters: storms, icy weather
- Utility Disruption, water, electricity, heating
- Fire/smoke Emergencies
- Hazardous Material; chemical spills
- Disgruntled or Impaired Parent/Guardian
- Pandemic Flu or other Pandemic Episodes
- Evacuation Process and Procedure for Sheltering Off-site
- 

***Immediate response – first 24 hours***

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (CIMT)	COMMUNICATION PLAN
<p><b>Designated team leader</b> Erica Condon</p> <p><b>All staff</b> Elaine Cowan Jenn Baker Edel Meaney</p> <p><b>Designated committee liaison person</b> Elaine Bowe Breda Murphy Louise Boyle Mary MacNamara Helen Nugent</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify emergency/incident</li> <li>2. Implement appropriate emergency preparedness plan</li> <li>3. Contact emergency services, 999 or 122</li> <li>4. Evacuation of children and staff if necessary</li> <li>5. Delegate immediate first aid</li> <li>6. Ensure safety and welfare of children and staff</li> <li>7. Notify committee members</li> <li>8. Notify parents</li> <li>9. Identify children and staff members most closely involved and at risk</li> <li>10. Manage media (elaine Bowe)</li> <li>11. Maintain Emergency Operational Procedure &amp; Time Log</li> </ol>

**Secondary Response [24–72 hours]**

1. Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved.
2. Provide parents and wider community with factual information as appropriate.

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3. Arrange debriefing for all parents, children most closely involved and at risk.
4. Restore playschool to regular routine, program delivery, and community life as soon as practicable.
5. Complete critical incident report.

**On-going Follow-up Response**

1. Identify any other persons who may be affected by the critical incident and provide information to support services for community members.
2. Provide accurate information to parents.
3. Arrange a memorial service and occasional worship as appropriate.
4. Maintain contact with any injured and affected parties to provide support and to monitor progress.
5. Monitor all staff and children for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder; providing information on treatment as necessary.
6. Evaluate critical incident and Emergency management plan.
7. Be sensitive to anniversaries.
8. Manage any possible longer-term disturbances e.g., inquests, legal proceedings.

**Guidance on providing information may be found in ....**

“Responding to Critical Incidents, Resource Materials for Schools”, Department of Education and Science, 2007;

**General Information**

PART VIII of the Child Care Preschool Services Act 2016 states:

Notification of incidents 31: A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (a) The death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;
- (b) The diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);
- (c) An incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;
- (d) A serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;
- (e) An incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

**Immediate response – first 24 hours**

CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM	COMMUNICATION PLAN
<p><b>Designated team leader</b> Erica Condon</p> <p><b>All staff</b> Elaine Cowan Jenn Baker</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify emergency/incident</li> <li>2. Implement appropriate emergency preparedness plan</li> <li>3. Contact emergency services, 999 or 112</li> <li>4. Evacuation of children and staff if necessary</li> <li>5. Delegate immediate first aid</li> <li>6. Ensure safety and welfare of children and staff</li> <li>7. Notify committee members</li> </ol>

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Edel Meaney <b>Designated committee liaison person</b> Elaine Bowe Breda Murphy Louise Boyle Mary MacNamara Helen Nugent	8. Notify parents 9. Identify children and staff members most closely involved and at risk 10. Manage media (Elaine Bowe) 11. Maintain Emergency Operational Procedure & Time Log
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## **EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST**

### CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

ROLE	NAME	PHONE NUMBER
Designated Team Leader	Erica Condon	
Staff Member 1	Elaine Cowan	
Staff Member 2	Jenn Baker	
Staff Member 3	Edel Meaney	
Designated Committee Liaison Person/Media response and Chair Person	Elaine Bowe	
Deputy Chair Person	Breda Murphy	
Committee Member 1	Mary MacNamara	
Committee Member 2	Louise Boyle	
Committee Member 3	Helen Nugent	

### **Life-threatening or time-critical emergency**

SERVICE	PHONE NUMBER	999	112
Local Garda Station Cahir	052 7445630	999	112
Local Garda Station Clonmel	052 6122222	999	112
Fire Brigade		999	112
Ambulance		999	112
Ardfinnan Health Centre	052 7441364		
Cahir Health Centre	052 7441364		
Electricity	1850 372 999		
Gas	1850 20 50 50		
Water	1890 278 278		
Local Authority	0761 065000		
Priest	052-7464408		
Tusla	01 7718500		

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<b>Health &amp; Safety Authority</b>	<b>(01) 614 7000</b>		
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### Recommended Emergency Evacuation Bag Checklist

CONTENTS	✓
Child data	
Children and staff with special needs list, including median needed	
Child release forms... sign in/out sheet	
Staff data	
Emergency contact list	
Traffic safety vests	
Keys	
Standard portable first aid kit	
A charged mobile phone	
Torch with rechargeable batteries	
Bottled water	
Portable non-perishable snacks, raisins etc.	
Toiletries and sunscreen	
Whistle	
Plastic rubbish bag with ties	
Other:	
Other:	

### EMERGENCY OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE & TIME LOG

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Emergency \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time of initiation \_\_\_\_\_ Time of stand down \_\_\_\_\_

Issues to be addressed	Time	Comments
Designated person informed		
Critical incident management team contacted		
Initiation of plan		
Assess of children and staff safety		
Outside sources to be contacted e.g.		
Fire/Ambulance/Garda contacted		
Do children need to be moved Safety point 1 Safety point 2 Safety point 3 Safety point 4		
Delegation of duties to Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid</li> <li>• Segregation of children</li> <li>• Services need to be isolated, e.g. electric's, water, gas,</li> <li>• Are all entrances secure</li> <li>• Front door</li> <li>• Emergency exits</li> <li>• Assistance required for evacuation</li> <li>• Secure Site</li> </ul>		
Have all staff off duty been contacted, contact committee		
Do parents need to be contacted		
Do services need to be cancelled		
Organise children to be collected		
Is there risk of infection		
Emergency lead calls stand down		
All parties informed of stand down		

Designators/Co-ordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies of report to: Board of Management and CIMT members

**Contacting Emergency Services – What to Expect****What happens when you call 112 or 999**

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When you dial 112 (or 999), your emergency call is answered at a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).

The specially trained call-taker will request you to state which service you require (i.e. An Garda Síochaná, Fire Service, Ambulance Service or Coast Guard) and will also check your location with you.

The call is then transferred to the Emergency Service Control Centre you requested based on your location and handled accordingly.

Most importantly if the line is busy, please do not hang up. The call will be answered as quickly as possible.

**You will be asked the following:**

Depending on which emergency service you request, you will need to clearly communicate the following information:

Where the emergency is: Give the exact address of the incident or emergency and/or any noticeable landmarks nearby.

Try to give clear directions to the scene of the emergency

Contact details: The telephone number you are calling from

What has occurred: Details on the incident itself, when it occurred and whether it will require more than one of the services e.g. ambulance and fire services

Who is involved: The number of persons involved, the description of any visible injuries and knowledge of any pre-existing medical conditions

Remember, it is important to wait for the call-takers instructions, try and stay calm and don't hang up until they tell you to.

Placing the facility address with accompanying directions near the telephone can help staff, children, or even visitors, should they have to dial 112 (or 999).

**ALL CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team) PERSONS NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH ABOVE PROCESS.**

**EVUACTION POINTS  
ARDFINNAN COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL**

<b>SAFETY POINT 1</b>	<b>LOCATED IN THE GARDEN BEHIND THE SLIDE ON THE SOFT PLAY AREA</b>
<b>SAFETY POINT 2</b>	<b>LOCATED IN THE MAIN CAR PARK OF THE PLAY-SCHOOL, ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF MAIN DOOR ON THE RAILING FACING THE FOOTPATH.</b>

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<b>SAFETY POINT 3</b>	<b>LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GREEN AREA ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE PLAYSCHOOL</b>
<b>SAFETY POINT 4</b>	<b>LOCATED IN THE CHURCH ON THE MAIN STREET OF ARDFINNAN VILLAGE</b>
<b>SAFETY POINT 5</b>	<b>LOCATED IN THE PRESCHOOL IN A PREDESIGNATED ROOM</b>

THE CIMT LEADER WILL DETERMIN WHAT SAFETY POINT IS NECESSARY FOR EVUACTION

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## SAFETY

# CLEANING

### Statement

We at Ardfinnan Community Playschool implement good practice and work effectively to ensure our service is maintained to a very high standard. All employees are required to follow the cleanliness and hygiene procedures.

### Principle

Ardfinnan Community Playschool derived guidance from Túsła when developing our Cleaning Schedules

### Procedure

Ardfinnan Community Playschool will be maintained in a clean, hygienic state throughout the day and a cleaning record is kept. Our staff are responsible for the materials and equipment used. They ensure that such items are clean, hygienic and safe at all times. The following measures are taken to encourage a clean hygienic playschool:

#### General

- Children will be encouraged to care for their environment.
- Cleaning routines and procedures are in place and are closely monitored and recorded.
- Hand washing is the most important defence against the spread of infection, our children and staff will be aware of the importance and the need to wash our hands several times a day.
- Staff should ensure children wash their hands after playing outside, before eating, after using the toilet and after any messy play with sand, paint, shaving foam etc.
- Staff should ensure they wash their hands before and after handling or preparing any food, after handling bins, after helping a child in the toilet, before and after changing a child who has soiled themselves and after cleaning bodily fluids (blowing noses, cleaning up vomit, urine etc.)

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- Children will be encouraged to develop their own personal hygiene routine, self-care and independence will be taught.
- In the event of a spillage (e.g.) blood, vomit, urine (etc.) it will be cleaned up very promptly
- Cloths are colour coded to be used in a particular room; they are washed on a regular basis and replaced when needed.

**All cleaning products are stored safely and out of children's reach.**

### **Play Room**

- Staff are responsible for keeping the playroom clean and tidy.
- Cleaning schedules are posted in each room and must be filled in by staff members as cleaning tasks are completed.
- At the end of each session table tops must be cleaned, floors swept and bins emptied. These tasks must be recorded on the cleaning schedule.
- Staff are responsible for cleaning and monitoring all equipment in the play room.
- A list of all toys and equipment will be compiled by staff in each room. A monthly cleaning schedule will be drawn up to include the appropriate cleaning of each toy or piece of equipment at least once within the month.
- Staff should draw up a rota between themselves to share the cleaning tasks
- Hard surface equipment will be washed in warm soapy water and dried with towels. Soft toys can be machine washed and toys or equipment not suited to being immersed in water can be wiped clean with a cloth and anti-bacterial spray.
- Any damaged or broken toys or equipment must be disposed of.
- Children's Toilet area must be monitored throughout the session and cleaned if necessary.
- The sink must also be cleaned regularly.

### **Kitchen**

- Kitchen must be kept spotlessly clean at all times.
- Surfaces should be wiped down regularly throughout the day with anti-bacterial spray and clean cloth.
- Press doors and handles should be washed weekly
- Inside presses should be cleaned once a month
- Fridge should be washed inside and out monthly
- All staff are responsible for washing up any utensils used by them for lunch.
- Dishwasher should be washed inside and out monthly

### **Toilets**

- Toilets will be maintained in a clean and hygienic state at all times.
- All staff members have a responsibility to check the toilets throughout the day.
- Any toilet tissue on the floor must be removed.
- Staff should ensure all toilets are flushed by children after use.
- Any spillages or accidents must be cleaned up immediately.
- If children use sinks in toilet area to wash their hands after painting, sinks must be checked by staff and any paint in sink or on tiles must be cleaned.

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## Equipment and Facilities

In planning the layout of the room, emphasis is given to minimising safety risks and allowing clear space whilst ensuring that activities are carefully monitored.

- All areas to be checked daily upon arrival into rooms, and routinely during the day.
- External exits to be kept clear and unobstructed at all times. In the classroom keep doorway clear and accessible at all times.
- Check all equipment and work areas to ensure it is safe to use prior to using it. Where a defect or safety concern is identified do not use the equipment until it has been cleared for use by the Management.
- There is a phone in the building at all times.
- All water in the children's wash basins are thermostatically controlled, if you suspect that the water is too hot for the children; please report to this to Management.
- Ensure all sockets not in use have safety finger guards in place.
- All equipment should be turned off every evening on locking up, windows and doors secured, and all waste material disposed of.
- Toys are to be picked up/tidied away when not in use. Encourage children to pick up any toys that fall on the floor. Do not allow equipment to be left on the floor as it is a tripping hazard.
- All broken toys/equipment are to be discarded.
- Special attention must be paid to the outdoor environment. Any broken or dangerous equipment is to be taken out of use until it can be repaired or otherwise discarded

## SAFETY

# VISITORS POLICY

**Statement:** Ardfinnan Community Playschool aims to ensure the safety of all who work, attend, and visit our play-school. We aim to give a warm welcome to all visitors with legitimate business in our service while ensuring that no unauthorized person gains entry. This policy is underpinned by Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

## Visitors Procedures

All visitors are asked to state their business with the service prior to entering the building.

All visitors must sign in and out in the visitors' book. The sign in book needs the following information: - date, company name, signature, time in and out. During Covid-19 restrictions, a phone number is required for the purpose of Contact Tracing.

A member of staff will always accompany visitors in the service whilst in the building; at no time will a visitor be left alone with a child/children

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Visitors must look after their own and others health and safety

The service will under no circumstances tolerate any form of harassment from third parties including visitors towards others, including children, staff, and parents.

## HUMAN RESOURCE

# RECRUITMENT POLICY

### Principle

This policy is underpinned by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, Freedom of Information Act 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, Regulation 9 and Regulation 10 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited (ACCCL) is committed to ensuring that recruitment procedures are fair, open and transparent and comply with the relevant employment legislation. Personal information received is dealt with in the strictest confidence and is held in line with General data Protection Regulations 2018. All recruitment and selection will be made from the widest possible field and positions will be advertised internally and externally.

### Statement

ACCCL will ensure that there is no bias on the grounds of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, race, religion, membership of the traveling community, (as pertaining to the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2004). ACCCL is an equal opportunities employer.

All necessary steps are taken to ensure that children are protected, as far as possible, in the recruitment and selection processes, and that ACCCL fulfils its duty of care in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of all those who will have access to the children. This includes requiring appropriate Garda/Police Vetting and written references in accordance with Children First.

### The goals of this policy are:

- To recruit the best possible people to Ardfinnan Community Playschool and provide clear guidelines to management and employees on the recruitment and selection process.
- To ensure, through the recruitment and selection process, that children are protected and Ardfinnan Community Playschool fulfils its duty of care relating to safe recruitment and selection practice.
- To ensure the process is managed fairly without either direct or indirect discrimination towards any individual or group.
- To ensure that Ardfinnan Community Playschool is compliant with all relevant legislation and quality practice in this area.

### Recruitment procedures

- Detailed job description is prepared, which includes
  - Job title

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- Location of the position
- Who the employee will report to
- Overall purpose of the job
- Key area of work
- Duties and responsibilities
- Conditions of employment
- Personal specifications; clear criteria are agreed against which all applicants are assessed. These outline;
  - Qualifications – specifying FETAC Level 5, 6, 7 or equivalent, all staff working with children must hold at minimum a FETAC Level 5 in Childcare
  - Skills
  - Experience
  - Other attributes required to carry out the job satisfactory (e.g., current First Aid Certificate)

### Advertising

All posts are publicly advertised in local or national newspapers and state clearly that Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee (ACCCL) is an equal opportunities employer.

All advertisements include the following:

- Name and role of the company – Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited
- Job title
- Brief description of the job
- Location of position
- Qualifications and experience which are essential and which are desirable
- Whether the position is full time or part time, temporary or permanent
- How to apply – job application form, CV
- How to get further information
- Closing date for application
- Equal opportunities statement
- Relevant logos

### Short listing

A short-listing panel with a minimum of three people is set up to review all applications. This should include a member from an external organisation and both sexes should be represented if possible.

- The selection criteria are based on the information in the advertisement and the job description. Assessment of applications is based only on information provided by the applicant
- All applicants who meet the selection criteria are invited to attend and interview
- A letter of regret is sent to all applicants who do not meet the selection criteria
- A complete report of the short-listing process is prepared by the short-listing panel

### Interviews

An interview panel with a minimum of three people is selected by the Management Committee and always includes at least one member of the short-listing panel. The panel also includes a representative from an external organisation. Where possible both sexes are represented on the interview panel.

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- Each member of the panel is supplied with the applications and CVs in advance
- A list of interview questions based on the job description is prepared in advance of the interviews. The panel decides in advance who will cover each area, questions must not reflect discrimination in any way
- Each candidate is asked the same questions
- At the end of each interview the candidate is invited to ask questions or to give any additional information
- Candidates' answers are scored and the totalling of scores gives the order on which candidates are panelled and job offers are made
- When the interviews are completed the interview panel prepares a full report of the interview process. The report is signed by each member of the panel and is **kept on file for at least one year** together with the short-listing report and the interview score sheet
- Any candidate who wishes to have feedback on their interview is entitled to this feedback in a timely fashion by writing to ACCCL
- A person may claim discrimination at interview up to six months post interview and a further six months should exceptional circumstances apply. This claim must be made in writing.
- A claim of discrimination or appeal of the interview outcome will be investigated by ACCCL immediately and their findings communicated in writing to the claimant. Should the claim be upheld ACCCL must find a suitable remedy
- The claimant retains the right to have their complaint investigated by the appropriate mechanism of the state, should they be unhappy with ACCCL's investigation and findings.

### Selection Process

The position is offered to the candidate with the highest mark on the score sheet after references have been checked.

- A reference from the current or most recent employer
- Both referees are contacted verbally by telephone and this is followed up with a written reference
- Failure of a referee to provide a reference should not disqualify a candidate; other sources of reference should be pursued
- Garda Vetting is sought
- Documentation confirming identity is required for all employees, such as a passport, driver's licence or public services card

Letters of regret are sent to all unsuccessful candidates within one week of the interviews.

### Garda Vetting

All Management Committee Members and Directors, the Manager and all employees of this service will each have two references taken up and will also be appropriately Garda Vetted. Garda Vetting is renewed every three years.

All other persons who work in the service such as contractors, students and volunteers will be appropriately vetted to ensure that children are protected at all times. Parents/guardians who go on occasional outings and/or who work in a supportive role with the service are not required to be vetted as they will not have unsupervised access to children other than their own.

**All applicants must submit a properly completed Garda Vetting Form when an offer of position has been made.**

*Garda vetting must be submitted when an offer of a position has been made and where a person has worked in a state or country outside of Ireland for 6 consecutive months where it is practicable to do so.*

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Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee reserves the right not to appoint an applicant if any unacceptable previous criminal conviction/s record, prosecution/s (successful or not, pending or completed), or a query related to their identity comes to light and/or was not disclosed at application stage.

### Assessing a Disclosure

If someone has a criminal record it doesn't automatically mean they will be unsuitable.

ACCCL will consider:

- The nature of the offence
- How long ago it took place
- Its relevance to the job
- The risk to children if it were to be repeated

*... For example, motoring offences, may not need to be a prohibition to an offer of employment*

Where a vetting disclosure is received which causes concern regarding a candidate, ACCCL will undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to determine the suitability of the candidate for employment.

It is essential that all adults who work with the children in the service are suitable, therefore those who are recruited through employment schemes such as the Community Employment Childcare Training and Development Programme (CE) are required to undergo a thorough selection and assessment process in the same way as other employees.

### Validation

- Candidates must produce their original certificate of qualifications including FETAC qualifications and First Aid
- A copy of the qualifications will be kept in their personal file

### Verification of Certificates and Reference Checks

An applicant must submit names of two referees who will be contacted by the manager of Ardfinnan Community Playschool in confidence, one of whom must be a current employer if the person is employed or the most recent employer if not.

Where the applicant has been employed in the early year's sector, a reference will be sought where practicable

- In the case of internal applicants who have been employed in this service for five years or more ACCCL the registered provider of this service, as their employer can provide a reference.

Where a reference form a previous employer is not available, references will be sought from reputable persons. Character references will not be obtained instead of appropriate employer references.

It is the responsibility of the manager on behalf of ACCCL to check references and to ensure that they are satisfied as to the character and suitability and relevant experience of the candidate prior to any person being appointed or allowed access to a child in the service.

All referees must be contacted in person or by phone in order to:

- Either obtain a verbal reference, which must be documented on a verbal reference form, signed and dated by the manager and recorded confidentially on the employee's file; or
- Verify a written reference from the referee. The referee is asked to confirm that they authored the written reference. The reference, once verified, is signed and dated by the manager

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References will only be obtained from a current employer with the candidate's permission and after all other references have been taken up.

- Board members and Directors of the Board for Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Limited by Guarantee are also required to have two written validated references

Qualifications are verified by viewing the original certificate, a certified copy of the certificate, the original transcript or certified copy of the transcript. Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Limited by Guarantee will document that the appropriate document has been verified.

### **Contract of Employment**

A written contract of employment is prepared for each new employee of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee. **It is a legal requirement to provide employees with a contract of Employment.** A signed copy of the contract is maintained on the employees personnel file and the employee is provided with a copy for their own retention

All contracts include:

- The full name of employer and employee
- Commencement date of employment
- Duration of the contract
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Reporting procedures
- Salary and method of payment
- Working hours
- Annual leave
- Details of sick pay
- Information on grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Information on codes of conduct
- Duration of probationary period
- The period of notice expected to be given to receive on termination of job

**General Terms and Conditions of Employment are detailed in the Staff Handbook which every member of staff receives upon employment.**

### **Induction**

An induction period is provided for all new employees. This helps new staff to settle-in quickly and gain all the information necessary to do his/her job effectively.

Employees are provided with

- A copy of the staff handbook once read and understood the new employee must sign it and it is kept in their file
- Confidentiality statement to be read and signed and held in employee's file
- Policies and procedures including Health, Safety, Fire Drills, Positive Behaviour and Child Protection must be read and signed by employee
- Information about the employee's new role
- Information on the role of other employees

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- Introduction to key personnel and agencies

The induction period should allow for an assessment of the new employee's knowledge and skills. A plan should be agreed between the employee and the employer to address any gaps identified.

### Probation

All new contracts should be subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period. During the period of probation, the management will ensure that the employee is fully assisted in understanding the demands of his/her post. Any problems or difficulties should be fully explored and the employee should be advised of his/her progress. During the period of probation, the contract can be terminated by either party in accordance with the provisions of the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973-2001.

The period of probation can be extended for a specific period if management is not fully satisfied that the employee is suitable for the post. The employee will be informed through supervision and in writing of the reasons for this decision.

When extending probation, it should be noted that once an employee has completed one year's continuous service, they are covered under the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977-2001. (Management satisfaction or not with the performance of new staff should be established before one year's continuous employment).

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## HUMAN RESOURCE

### Sample Job Descriptions

# Administrator

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee

### Job Description

#### Administrator In Ardfinnan Community Playschool Lady's Abbey Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

<b>NAME OF EMPLOYER:</b>	Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Administrator
<b>ROLE:</b>	Administrator in Ardfinnan Community Playschool, Lady's Abbey, Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG chairperson or it's delegated officer

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Administrator will have the following responsibilities:

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**Reception**

- Meeting & greeting visitors
- Dealing with visitor queries, drop offs and collections
- Keeping a record log of all visitors in/out of the building
- Answering incoming calls promptly in a friendly and professional manner and directing calls to the relevant member of staff
- Maintaining a neat and tidy reception area
- Assisting with external suppliers of products and services to the office
- Logging, sorting and distributing the daily post as appropriate
- Ensuring meeting rooms are prepared in advance of all meetings

**Administration**

- Day to day ad hoc administration and secretarial tasks to support the operations of the service
- To administer the service in line with policies and procedures set out by Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG, and meeting the requirements of relevant funding organisations
- To provide the operational management of the service
- To coordinate enrolment of new children in consultation with Room Leader
- To liaise with parents/guardians regarding attendance at playschool and payment of fees
- To administer applications for relevant government schemes e.g. ECCE
- To collaborate with Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG and the Room Leader in developing policies and procedures pertinent to the service.
- Garda Vetting of all staff members
- Supporting members with Garda Vetting queries
- To help staff in facilitating training and good practice by liaising with other facilities e.g. County Childcare Committee, Pobal and Early Childhood Ireland
- To devise staff roster in collaboration with Room Leader
- To maintain Personnel Files including records of training provided
- To maintain financial records and submit accounts to Ardfinnan Childcare Committee ALG Accountants
- Attend and report to committee meetings
- To carry out any other reasonable duties as requested by Ardfinnan Childcare Committee ALG

**Other**

- At all times undertake the role in a professional manner, maintaining a high-quality standard of work, in accordance with the aims, values and ethos of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee.

**Person Specification**

- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to work independently as well as part of a team
- Multi-tasking and time management skills, with the ability to prioritise tasks
- Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills are vital
- Strong administrative skills

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- Effective time management skills

### Essential Requirements

- Administrative and budget management skills
- Strong Microsoft Office skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Clear understanding of what good customer service looks like
- Knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Playschool service
- Commitment to quality
- Willingness to be flexible in work

### Personal Attributes and Qualities

- Dependable
- Organised
- Professional and hardworking

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## HUMAN RESOURCE

### Sample Job Descriptions

# Early Years Educator, Room Assistant

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee

### Job Description

Early Years Educator Room Assistant in Ardfinnan Community Playschool Lady's Abbey Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

<b>NAME OF EMPLOYER:</b>	Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Early Years Educator, Room Assistant
<b>ROLE:</b>	Room Assistant in Ardfinnan Community Playschool, Lady's Abbey, Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Room Leader in Ardfinnan Community Playschool and/or Ardfinnan Childcare Committee or its delegated officer.

### DUTY:

At all times undertake the role of Early Years Educator in a professional manner, maintaining a high-quality standard of work, in accordance with the aims, values and ethos of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee.

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**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- To assist the Room leader in providing a pre-school service to all children who attend the service in a professional manner
- To aid the planning and implementation of an age-appropriate, stimulating curriculum based on Síolta and Aistear alongside the Room leader.
- Respect the principle of confidentiality at all times regarding the children, their families and other staff.
- To guide observe, stimulate and supervise children in a safe and caring environment
- To provide a safe hygienic environment where children can access play opportunities.
- To set up and assist in clearing away and deciding upon play activities for the day and becoming part responsible for the care and maintenance of all equipment ensuring it meets Health and Safety Standards
- To provide opportunities for the children that will aid a child's physical, emotional, linguistic and intellectual development.
- To communicate respectfully with children at their level.
- To continually observe children and record all observations.
- To play an active role in the day to day running of the service and become involved in programme planning to ensure the continued growth of the service.
- To familiarise yourself and adhere to all policies and procedures of Ardfinnan Community Playschool and familiarise yourself with the Early Years Inspectorate Quality and Regulatory Framework
- To adopt the principles of positive behaviour management approach to discipline
- To encourage parental involvement and communicate with parents/guardians on a daily basis
- Help in all record keeping on a daily and weekly basis in association with the Room Leader.
- To attend and participate in all staff meetings and attend Committee meetings where it is deemed necessary by the Room Leader.
- To participate in relevant training as requested by leader and/or management and also from your own initiative, ensure that all necessary certificates are kept up to date.
- To support students on placement
- Familiarise yourself with and follow the procedures outlined in the Children First Act 2015 and report any child protection concerns to Room Leader/designated child protection officer.
- Identify and bring to the attention of the leader any health and safety concerns you have.
- Attend regular fire drills
- Any other duties that may be assigned by the Room Leader or Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG.

**PERSONAL SPECIFICATIONS:**

- Minimum FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Childcare or equivalent
- Experience in a childcare setting
- Good communication skills
- Respect for confidentiality of all stakeholders
- Sense of humour
- Completed Garda Vetting
- First Aid
- Manual Handling

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- Fire Safety
- Excellent oral and written English
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and as part of a team

#### Personal Attributes and Qualities

- Dependable
- Organised
- Professional and hardworking

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### HUMAN RESOURCE

#### Sample Job Description

## Early Years Educator, Lead Educator

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee

#### Job Description

Early Years Educator Room Leader In Ardfinnan Community Playschool Lady's Abbey Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

<b>NAME OF EMPLOYER:</b>	Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Early Years Educator, Room Leader
<b>ROLE:</b>	Room Leader in Ardfinnan Community Playschool, Lady's Abbey, Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG chairperson or it's delegated officer

#### DUTIES:

The room leader is responsible for the day-to-day running and management of Ardfinnan Community Playschool, ensuring the provision of a safe, welcoming and active learning environment for all children and their families as well as the staff. He/she is responsible for the supervision of staff working in the playschool and will delegate tasks accordingly.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### Main Job Description:

- To lead the planning and implementation of an age –appropriate, stimulating programme of activities which will enhance the child's natural growth and development based on Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Aistear the National Curriculum Framework
- To guide, observe, stimulate and supervise children in a safe and caring environment

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- To manage and work in close co-operation with the all staff
- To ensure the safety, security and the wellbeing of all the children in the service
- To ensure all quality and safety standards are maintained in the service at all times: including ensuring a good standard of hygiene, organising and conducting regular fire drills, ensuring that equipment is well maintained and safe to use
- To update the committee on a regular basis and to bring to the attention of the committee any matter for which it is responsible.

**Care of Children:**

- To be attentive to the children in the service
- To deal with issues as they arise in relation to the wellbeing of children and to bring any child protection concerns to the attention of the relevant authorities through following the service's Child Protection Policy
- To communicate respectfully with children at their level
- To keep completely confidential information regarding the children, their families and other staff, which he/she learns as part of the job. If the practitioner needs advice on such matters, he/she should discuss the issue with the Board of Management. In the interest of the child, confidentiality is crucial.

**Training and Meetings:**

- To undertake relevant or required training including first aid training, fire safety and manual handling and Children First
- To undertake training if requested by the Directors
- To attend and participate at meetings as required

**Parents:**

- To liaise with parents, who are the prime carers of the children, to keep them informed of the children's progress and wellbeing and build a partnership with parents to enhance the learning and development of each child

**Food**

- To encourage good eating habits and personal hygiene
- To use meal time as a social occasion with the children

**Curriculum**

- To lead in the planning and implementation of daily appropriate developmental activities for children
- To provide opportunities for children to learn in a holistic way
- To introduce children to the play equipment based on their individual needs
- To provide opportunities for self-directed play
- To ensure that the curriculum and activities are linked to Aistear
- To allow children to learn through fun
- To maintain written planning records

**Health and Safety**

- To report any safety hazards/ risks to the Administrator and or the Committee and Directors immediately
- To refrain from engaging in any activity that poses a risk to you, other members of staff or children
- To have a good knowledge of fire and safety procedures within the service
- To maintain a safe, clean and healthy environment
- To participate in cleaning duties as required under the services policies and procedures
- To use equipment according to instructions
- To maintain a safe and clean outside environment
- To ensure the safety, security and the wellbeing of all the children in your care
- To ensure all quality and safety standards are maintained in the centre at all times
- To carry out daily/weekly risk assessments

**Administration**

- To maintain appropriate records and documentation in compliance with the childcare Act, 1991 and the childcare (Pre School-Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulation, 2006.

**Communications**

- To communicate frequently with all staff members, Administrator, Committee members, Directors and parents as appropriate
- To communicate in a straightforward, accurate, and professional manner

**Other Duties**

- To be familiar with all the policies and procedures of the childcare centre and adhere to them
- To train students' workers and to assist new staff with induction
- To adhere to the childcare (Pre School-Services) Regulations and the childcare act and all other relevant legislation and regulation
- To understand that the Board of Directors is his/her employer and should discuss any problems regarding his/her employment with the Board.

At all times undertake the role in a professional manner, maintaining a high-quality standard of work, in accordance with the aims, values and ethos of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee.

**Essential Requirements**

- Minimum FETAC Level 6 in Childcare
- Kindness, warmth and responsiveness to the needs of children
- Good Communication and Relating Skills with children, staff and parents
- Have a sense of humour
- Knowledge of relevant legislation and regulations
- Complete Garda Vetting
- Up to date First Aid, Manual Handling and Fire Safety
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to work independently as well as part of a team

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- Multi-tasking and time management skills, with the ability to prioritise tasks
- Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills are vital
- Effective time management skills

#### Personal Attributes and Qualities

- Dependable
- Organised
- Professional and hardworking

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#### HUMAN RESOURCE

## EQUAL OPPURTUNITIES

#### Principle

This policy is underpinned by Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2015, Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2015, National Disability Authority Act 1999 and the Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006,

#### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises and respects the rights of all adults and children in our service. We aim to actively promote equality of access and participation and eliminate discrimination on grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age (not applicable to under 16's), disability, race and membership of the Traveling Community

#### Children

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool all children are valued, supported and nurtured as individuals. This is achieved through our play curriculum and our policies

- A wide range of activities and play equipment is provided in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Children whose first language is not English will be facilitated by using key words from their mother tongue and visual images to assist them in integrating into our playschool
- Children are encouraged at all times to appreciate similarities and value differences
- A range of materials are chosen to reflect cultures, gender and ability difference
- Collaboration and cooperation among children and staff is supported.

#### Families

All families will be encouraged to be involved in their children's early education, in whatever way is possible for them. Ardfinnan Community Playschool value the input of all families into decision making on an equal basis

- Parents will be encouraged to participate based on their interests, abilities and cultures

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- Parents whose first language is not English will be facilitated by using key words from their mother tongue and visual images to assist them in integrating into the service
- The time, place and tone of meetings will ensure that all families have an equal opportunity to attend and be involved, if they so wish

### **Additional Needs**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises the importance of treating children according to their needs. We will endeavour to make all efforts that are reasonable to accommodate the needs of a child/person with a disability.

- Every effort will be made to meet the needs of children and families using our service
- Where appropriate every effort will be made to meet the medical needs of children

### **Food and Festivals**

- Children and adults will be encouraged to experience a range of different festivals, for example through stories, celebrations, special food and clothing.
- Appropriate advice and input will be sought from people who celebrate the festival.
- Dietary and cultural needs of children and adults will be met.

### **Staff and Training**

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Limited by Guarantee is an equal opportunities employer.

- The recruitment and selection policy will reflect the ethos of the service in relation to equal opportunities for all
- Ardfinnan Childcare Committee CLG will deal with all job applicants in a fair manner and follow correct procedures as set out in current Employment and Equality Legislation
- In-service training will be provided for all staff on their rights and responsibilities
- Staff and children will be helped to understand that discriminatory actions and behaviour will not be accepted

## **HUMAN RESOURCE**

# **STAFF TRAINING**

### **Principle**

This policy is underpinned by Regulation 9 and Regulation 10 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee is committed to achieving a high standard of quality in the provision of its early childhood care and education service. This requires that the professional development, performance evaluation, training needs of employees are identified and addressed and acted on

### **The aims of this policy are:**

- To outline this service's commitment to full induction for new staff members and on-going staff development and training thereafter.

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- To ensure that staff development and training needs are identified and are well-planned for, well-resourced and organised efficiently and effectively with appropriate staff ratios maintained at all times.
- To ensure that all staff members are aware of the service's procedures for applying for training, that all requirements are met and that all staff members have equal access to appropriate training and development opportunities.
- To link the performance and staff development to the achievement of the service's operational and strategic goals and objectives, and its commitment to continuous improvement and quality service provision.

#### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool aims to be a learning environment, which supports both individual and team development. Access to quality induction and on-going training and development opportunities prepares staff members for both existing and future roles and responsibilities, and helps them to reach their full potential thereby enhancing the quality of their practice

#### Procedure

Ardfinnan Community Playschool take a structured approach to the induction of new staff members to ensure consistent and accurate communication about the service's policies, procedures, statements and regulatory requirements.

Students and volunteers are also inducted to the service's policies, procedures, statements and operations. Students who work with the children will be under the supervision of appropriately qualified and experienced staff members at all times.

All new management committee members/directors are provided with an appropriate induction on joining the committee.

All staff members regardless of age, grade, gender, ability/disability or ethnic background or the nature of their contract of employment are expected to undertake staff development and training, which is viewed as a continuous process throughout their time in the service.

Where specific policies are updated or amended, or a new policy is added, all staff members will be provided with training to ensure familiarity with the most up to date service policies.

This policy demonstrates Ardfinnan Community Playschools commitment to the development of staff members' awareness, knowledge and competencies through allowing time off for, and/or meeting the expenses of, relevant training courses, conferences, external meetings, participation in the local provider network or other such relevant educational events.

All applications for study leave shall be considered by the Management Committee and may only be approved after taking into account both service needs and budgetary commitments.

This policy applies to all staff and has been developed to ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity to attend learning and development events for all staff.

Ardfinnan Community Playschool encourages its staff members to undertake any other training or activities which aid their personal or professional development. Due to funding limitations, it may not always be possible for the service to provide funding to staff members to undertake such training.

All staff members also have regular supervision meetings and an annual appraisal within which to formally review their practice and training needs (see Staff Supervision Policy).

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Records are kept on each staff member's personnel file of all training events attended and courses completed while employed in this service.

### **Induction for new staff members**

The main purposes of the induction process for new staff members are:

- To introduce them to children, families and colleagues prior to commencing work.
- To make them aware of any specific needs of any child who will be in their care.
- To clarify Ardfinnan Community Playschools Statement of Purpose and Function.
- The legislative requirements and guidance documentation applicable to the service, including:
  1. Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)
  2. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.
  3. Child welfare and protection legislation and national policies
  4. Children First Act (2015) and Our Duty to Care (2002).
- To familiarise them with the service's Safety Statement.
- To familiarise them with the service's Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy.
- To familiarise them with the service's essential policies, procedures, routines and approach to quality and to the service's organisational structure.
- To explain the curriculum approach used in the service and how play and learning experiences at Ardfinnan Community Playschool are planned, implemented and evaluated.
- To clarify their roles and responsibilities (including record management) and those of others in the service.

The manager is responsible for assessing each new staff member's learning outcomes from the induction process through observation, feedback and reflection. The induction programme will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is still meeting the needs of new staff members and the service overall and will be amended if needed.

### **On-going training and professional development for staff members**

On an on-going basis all staff members, including the manager, are required to undertake certain training which is considered necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the service.

All staff members are also required to assume responsibility for their own development and training, which includes both participation in planned activities and making use of opportunities to learn when they are presented.

Staff development and training is an obligation for the manager who is responsible for identifying individual training and development needs and supporting and encouraging the staff members.

Formal processes – induction, supervision, appraisal and training needs analyses – are used at the individual level and planning for staff development and training is carried out by the management in consultation with staff members at both individual and team levels.

Overall accountability for staff development and training rests with the manager

Staff development and training provision will be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure that it is of good quality, relevant, effective and provides value for money.

It is the responsibility of management to ensure that trainers are competent (have the knowledge, skills, abilities and relevant qualifications where required) to give the training required and external trainers have the appropriate accreditation/certification to provide the required training.

### **Supervision of students**

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Students/Trainees who work with the children are at all times under the supervision of an appropriately qualified staff member. They are supported and supervised by appropriately experienced members of staff to assist them to carry out their duties to promote and protect the wellbeing; learning and development of the children (see Supervision Policy).

### **Access to training for staff members**

Staff development and training priorities will be reviewed by the manager and management committee who have responsibility for staff development and training policy and practice. Training and development plans will be reviewed and approved annually

Training priorities will be decided on the basis of the current and evolving needs of the children and families who use the service, the agreed plans and aims of the service, and on-going developments in the early year's sector related to legislation and quality practice.

Existing qualifications, skills and competencies of the staff members and planned developments at the service will also be considered when prioritising training needs.

### **Finance for training and staff development**

The budget for staff development and training is administered by the management Committee. These funds are allocated to support the service in the achievement of its agreed objectives.

### **Records and Record Keeping**

Training records for all staff members will be maintained by the service subject to General Data Protection (GDPR) requirements.

Records of Certified/Accredited training are held on each staff members file.

The staff of Ardfinnan Community Playschool undertakes on-going professional development, which is recorded and retained in their personnel files.

### **Communication Plan**

All staff will be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Staff Development and Training on commencement in the service. The manager ensures staff members have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed. This policy will be reviewed with staff members at induction and annual staff training.

Parents/guardians are informed that there is a Staff Training Policy and may see it and/or receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE**

# **SUPERVISION POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is committed to providing staff supervision to maintain and promote its high standards. This policy forms part of our overall performance management structure which includes recruitment, induction and training.

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**Principal**

This policy is in line with guidelines set down in the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Supervision is a process for staff and management to discuss work, reflect on current or emerging issues and plan for future development. Supervision sessions provide an opportunity to monitor and ensure quality of practice as well as providing support to all staff, feedback is gained and any training issues needed discussed.

Staff are encouraged to put forward new ideas, make suggestions for changes or to request additional training. Staff supervision is provided by the Room Leader and/or Office Administrator; it follows a planned and agreed structure and takes place regularly, depending on the needs of our service. Ardfinnan Community Playschool recommends staff supervision takes place on quarterly bases.

All staff members will have a regular, consistent and uninterrupted supervision meeting with their supervisor in order to:

- Support them in their work.
- Ensure that they are clear about their role and responsibilities.
- Ensure competent and accountable performance.
- Ensure that, in their respective roles, they meet Ardfinnan Community Playschool's standards and objectives.
- Ensure a positive atmosphere for practice.
- Support their professional development.
- Help keep stress to a minimum.
- Increase awareness of new areas of professional knowledge.
- Ensure that they are given the resources to do their job.
- Provide an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns.
- Ensure the quality of service provided to children and families.

Staff members are encouraged to reflect on the quality of their practice, continually update their knowledge base and raise any safeguarding concerns.

**Procedure**

- A programme of support and supervision will be agreed between management and each staff member and volunteer. We recommend that this is arranged prior to commencing employment or volunteer work
- Meetings will be held with all staff on quarterly bases by the Lead Educator and or Administrator
- A support and supervision template will be completed during the meeting and will be used as a basis for discussion
- The template will consider specific areas of work, issues emerging, work with children in their care, training needs and personal development
- The Lead Educator and/or Office Administrator will keep a written record of these regular meetings on this template for inclusion in the personnel file of each staff member, these notes will be dated and signed by both parties.
- Actions arising from Support and Supervision meetings will be reviewed at the next meeting

**All staff members are entitled to:**

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- Respect as a person and in their role.
- Clarity in relation to their role and responsibilities.
- Clarity about the boundaries of confidentiality – where it is necessary to inform others of something that arises during supervision, the supervisor and supervisee should discuss how this can be done.
- Clarity about expectations.
- Have their experience and contribution acknowledged.
- Be briefed about changes in the service.
- Participate in planning and problem solving and not just be told what to do.
- Access to continuing professional development/training relevant to their job.
- Clarification about the service’s policies and procedures.
- Be allocated an appropriate and manageable workload.
- Clarity about the basis of decisions that impact on them either directly or indirectly.
- Regular and uninterrupted supervision.
- Formal appraisal.

### Appraisals

- A review will take place at the end of each staff member’s probationary period and thereafter annually
- The annual review or appraisal is carried out for the purpose of giving the employee feedback of the work of the year, provide support for staff in their role, provide opportunities to discuss ideas and concerns and plan objectives for the year ahead
- The appraisal will include a review of the job description which may be updated as necessary by agreement of both parties
- Both parties will sign a record of the appraisal meeting
- Records of the appraisal will be kept confidential to the Room Leader and Office Manger except in cases of formal disciplinary or grievances or with the joint agreement of both parties
- All staff personnel files will be retained for six years after the person has ceased employment

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## HUMAN RESOURCE

# STUDENT AND VOLUNTEERS

### Statement

Ardfinnan Community Playschool believes that a placement in our service is a valuable opportunity where a student or volunteer will learn and experience hands-on the importance of early childhood care and education. Equally we appreciate the energy and enthusiasm new people bring to the environment

We at Ardfinnan Community Playschool believe that the welfare of the child is paramount and it is with this in mind we carefully select all students and volunteers to work in our Early Years’ Service.

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**Principle**

This policy is underwritten by Regulation 8 and 12: Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 Developed according to Tusla-The Child and Family Agency Procedure: Garda Vetting, Employee References [and recorded validations] & Qualifications

Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee will offer students a variety of learning opportunities in the area of early education. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II 8 Management & Staffing) (Siolta Standard 9: Health & Welfare, Siolta Standard 16: Community Involvement) (National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 11: Child Protection)

**Policy**

- All volunteers and students will be over the age of sixteen with the exception of transition year students.
- Validated References and Garda vetting will be obtained for all students by Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee
- The duration and timing of placement will be agreed in advance of the placement with the Administrator
- Students/volunteers will be required to read all policies and procedures of the service as part of their induction.
- Students/volunteers will be required to 'sign-off' that they had read and understood the policies and procedures of the service.
- Students/volunteers will not work unsupervised with either individuals or groups of children.
- The Lead Educator will be responsible for students.
- Students/volunteers should have a clear defined role, i.e., duties and responsibilities of the student.
- Students/volunteers should have a clear defined role, and will sign a declaration of confidentiality.
- Students/volunteers will not deal with parents.
- Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee is aware of their responsibility to provide a 'real and rich' learning environment for the student.

**Prior to Placement of Students**

- Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee will ensure that there are appropriate links with colleges.
- Colleges should, in writing, introduce the student, giving the service a profile of the student, highlighting any additional needs and an outline of the course content.
- All students must attend an interview with the Lead Educator and Office Administrator
- Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee will ensure that they receive confirmation (copy of insurance certificate) from the college confirming that students are insured by the college while on placement.
- All students must attend an induction programme to enable them to develop an awareness of the service.
- A file will be maintained on all students containing such information pertaining to the college placement, college, tutor etc.

**Meeting before start date**

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Each student or volunteer will meet with a member of management before they begin in the service. This is an opportunity to talk about the needs of the student/ volunteer and how the service may be able to accommodate them.

### **Agreement of role**

A description of the role of the student/ volunteer will be developed, helping all staff and others understand the expectations of the student/ volunteer. This may also be used as a reference when giving support and supervision

### **Garda Vetting**

*Students:* All students must be Garda Vetted. Students will be required to complete a Garda Vetting Application Form before they commence their placement Ardfinnan Childcare Company Limited by Guarantee. Students are required to complete Garda Vetting Application Forms in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Vetting Bureau.

Garda Vetting Forms will be held on site and are not transferable to other services or organisations.

Garda vetting is carried out by the service for all staff, students and volunteers. This is a requirement under the Pre-school Regulations 2006. Students under 18 years of age are not subject to Garda vetting.

### **Reference**

Two verified references from reputable sources are required for all students and volunteers where possible.

### **During Placement**

- Playroom Leader is responsible for assessing the training needs of students on placement and ensuring that they are given the opportunities to build on existing skills and to develop new skills.
- Playroom Leader will monitor the student's progress and liaise with the student's assessor at regular intervals throughout the period of the placement.
- Students must adhere to the service's policies and procedures.
- Students who are required to conduct child studies or work with children must obtain written permission from the parents of that child. Parents will have access to any written study. Students will consult with Playroom Leader on all written records.

While on placement Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee will support students by:

- Providing on-going support to make the placement as useful and beneficial as possible for students.
- Providing the information and support necessary for students to carry out any written assignments and prepare for assessment visits by the placement supervisor.

### **Dress Code**

Dress must be neat, clean and tidy. Clothing worn at work must be comfortable and not restrict movement. Sensible footwear must be worn i.e., shoes with low or flat heels, shoes must enclose the toes, sides and heel of the foot.

Tracksuits or pants are recommended while tops are to be non-revealing.

Any tattoos should not be on view.

Hair should be clean, washed, neat and tied back at all times.

Nails should be short and clean at all times. Painted nails are not considered appropriate for a childcare setting.

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Chewing gum is not permitted

### **Confidentiality**

Working as a student/volunteer within the service may on occasion give rise to students being aware of confidential information in relation to children and families attending the service.

- Students/Volunteers must not disclose or permit to be disclosed any information which concerns any child/children and/or families to any other person or agency/organisation unless you are required to do so in the context of child protection procedures or as required under legislation.
- Students/Volunteers should not share any information about other students or staff colleagues with a third party.
- Students/Volunteers will be advised as to the setting of boundaries between the working relationship and friendship with parents. Do not engage them in unnecessary conversations of a personal nature. Conversations should be restricted to greetings. Parents requesting information from students should be directed to the senior staff member in the room. If parents have an issue/complaint they should be referred immediately to Louise Boyle.
- Students/Volunteers may not use social networking sites to befriend parents whose children attend Ardfinnan Community Playschool or to exchange any information about the service or children attending the service.

### **Volunteers**

The hours that volunteers work will be arranged according to the hours the volunteer is available and the needs of the service in consultation with the Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee. There will be no minimum or maximum hours or any guarantee of voluntary work.

Working as a Volunteer in Ardfinnan Community Playschool does not preclude you from employment elsewhere.

All voluntary work is unpaid. Volunteers may be reimbursed for agreed expenses in consultation with the Board of Management of Ardfinnan Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee.

Volunteers should be present in the service and ready to commence their voluntary work at the arranged and agreed times.

Volunteers unable to attend at the arranged and agreed times should inform the office administrator by telephone as soon as possible in advance.

### **Aims And Objectives of Ardfinnan Community Playschool**

- To ensure that each child is safe and happy
- To treat each child as an individual and appreciate the uniqueness of each child
- To provide a quality community based Childcare facility
- To guide the child in the development of his/her senses, which are an integral part of the learning/development process
- To provide a safe and quality environment and service to facilitate each child's development.
- To ensure all staff receive appropriate training and support and maintain high levels of practice.
- To encourage partnership with parents, in an effort to provide an integrated, balanced broad, stimulating program
- To encourage, by means of outings and visits, an interaction with the wider community of Ardfinnan and the surrounding area.

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**Transition Year Students**

If Ardfinnan Childcare Company Limited by Guarantee takes on a transition year student or student under 18 years of age their parent/guardian will be required to complete and sign a form declaring that there are no convictions against the transition year student.

A transition year Student should never be left alone with any child in a pre-school service. They must be accompanied at all times by a staff member.

**All staff students and volunteers are asked to view and sign the Child Welfare Policy prior to beginning their work at Ardfinnan Community Playschool.**

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

The purpose of the confidentiality policy is to ensure that the rights of all children and parents are respected at all times. At Ardfinnan Community Playschool, our work with children and families will often mean we are privy to confidential information. To ensure that all those using and working in the service can do so with confidence, we will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

Parents have the right to access the files and records of their children, but will not have access to information about any other child.

- Staff will not discuss individual children, other than for the purposes of curriculum planning/group management, with people other than the parents/carers of that child.
- Accidents resulting in injury will be recorded in the Accident and Injury book.
- Feedback given to parents on their children's progress will be given directly to the parents, unless they state a third party can be involved for example a child minder or nanny.
- Information about a child's medical needs or status, or concerns about child protection issues will be kept in a separate file and will only be available to authorised personnel. Please refer to our child protection policy for further information.
- Information given by parents/carers to our staff members will not be passed onto other adults without permission. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only.
- All confidential information will be stored securely which may only be accessed by authorised personnel.

Students on work placements and any volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement prior to starting work in Ardfinnan Community Playschool.

All staff members sign a confidentiality clause in their contracts of employment as noted below.

In the event of a suspicion of child abuse, the designated Person in the service will contact the Health Service Executive, Social Work Duty Room or if "out of hours" the Garda Station Directly.

**Parents/guardians cannot be guaranteed confidentiality in the event of a suspected abuse necessitating reporting.**

All matters relating to the Employer, their business and clients are strictly confidential. Staff members must not disclose any trade secrets or other information of a confidential nature relating to the Employer or any of its associates

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or their business or in respect of which the Employer owes an obligation of confidence to any third party during or after your employment except in the proper course of your employment or as required by law.

Staff members may not disclose any information relating to the business of the Employer, clients, or those to whom an obligation of confidence exists, to any third party, either during or after your employment, except in the normal course of your employment, or as required by law.

Staff members must not at any time whatsoever remove any documents, computer disks or tapes containing any confidential information from the Employer's premises without proper advance authorisation. All such documents, disks or tapes including copies thereof remain the property of the Employer.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS/MOBILE PHONES**

Telephones are essential for our business. Personal telephone calls are restricted; we asked that staff keep these to a minimum.

The use of mobile phones is not permitted during working hours. Staff including Student and Volunteer members may take / make personal calls during work hours on an emergency basis; however, the use of the phone is not allowed within playroom and must be restricted to office or external grounds. Ardfinnan Community Playschool takes the use of personal mobile phones very seriously within playroom, the playground or on outings and it will result in disciplinary action being instigated.

We ask that all staff members including Students and Volunteers turn off phones and use office space provided to store their phones during working hours. The use of camera phones is strictly forbidden and pictures must not be taken with personal phones. Should staff members wish to take group photographs for display, the use of the play-school camera or iPad may be availed of. Similarly, video recording is strictly forbidden.

The use of the work mobile phone is strictly for Ardfinnan Community Playschool business only. Photographs are not permitted on this or any other phone.

The purpose of this policy is to support the Child Protection policy and to ensure the rights and privacy of all children is respected.

Failure to adhere to this policy will result in disciplinary action.

### **Equal Opportunities Policy**

It is our policy to make all children and adults feel welcome and valued and accepted for whom they are in our service, without fear of being ridiculed or condemned.

This policy on equal opportunity encompasses gender, race, class and disability; it promotes an understanding of cultural and physical diversity and challenges stereotypes. All staff have a responsibility to show clearly, through their work, that they value equally all cultures and racial backgrounds

### **Complaints Policy**

All complaints will be recorded and acted upon within two weeks of receipt of the complaint. A register of complaints will be maintained and made available for inspection on request.

### **Health And Safety Policy**

At Ardfinnan Community Playschool we take all steps to ensure the health and safety of each individual in the service. To achieve this, we have established safe working procedures amongst staff and children, to ensure that everyone is

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aware of these procedures. We will ensure that all articles and substances are handled, stored and transported safely. We will ensure that staff have access to first aid training. We will comply with the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. We will also comply with the Environmental Health Guidelines for Pre-School Services and The United Nation convention on the rights of the child 1992.

The service Health and Safety Statement is available in the administration office and all staff should be familiar with same.

**Ardfinnan Community Playschool has a detailed Student and Volunteer pack available to each student and volunteers to read prior to beginning their placement at our playschool.**

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## HUMAN RESOURCE

# STAFF ILLNESS POLICY

### **Purpose**

To provide guidelines for Management in implementing the Ardfinnan Community Playschool policy and on sick leave procedures. It runs in conjunction with the services Infectious control policy and covers all employees at our service.

### **Principle**

The law on sick leave and sick pay is set out in the Sick Leave Act 2022, the Commencement Order for the Sick Leave Act 2022 and the Sick Leave Act 2022 (Prescribed daily rate of payment) Regulations 2022

Ardfinnan Community Playschool supports a healthy working environment and is concerned for the health and wellbeing of its entire employees. It recognises the need for individual employees to absent themselves from work when they are ill, and the following regulations and procedures apply in such circumstances.

### **Procedures for Employees on Sick Leave**

\*The procedures apply during the probation period also:

- If you are absent due to illness, you should notify the Administrator by telephone as soon as possible on the evening before if possible or at least one hour before if you are due to be on duty. You are required thereafter to contact the Administrator on a day-to-day basis to confirm your absence, unless you are in receipt of a medical certificate for a specific period of time. Full reasons must be given at the time with an indication of the likely return date.
- When speaking with the room leader you should indicate the nature of your illness, the possible duration and when you will return to work. It is also required of you to speak with the room leader either on the day of absenteeism or the day before you are due to return to work before 4.00 p.m. in order to confirm that you will in fact be returning to work. This will give the playschool sufficient time to arrange cover if you are not fully recovered and are unable to return to work due to this fact.

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- Failure to contact the service by the specified time is a serious breach of the sick leave rules and may be subject to the disciplinary policy being invoked.
- Text messages, emails or voicemails alone are not considered an appropriate way to convey this information.
- Calls from relatives will not be accepted except in extreme circumstances. If a call is made by the employee's partner/relative on behalf of an employee, the employee should make contact with the room leader at the earliest possible opportunity
- After 3 days of continuous absence, a medical certificate must be furnished on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of absence at the latest. As a general rule, further medical certificates must be furnished at weekly intervals so long as the absence continues.

#### **All employees are entitled to the benefit of the Statutory Sick Pay scheme:**

- Date of enactment 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023
- Paid sick leave for up to 3 sick days per year in 2023, 5 days in 2024, 7 days in 2025 and 10 days in 2026.
- A rate of payment for statutory sick leave of 70% of normal wages to be paid by employers (up to a maximum €110 per day).

To be entitled to paid sick leave, the employee must be working with Ardfinnan Community Playschool for at least 13 weeks. Abuse of the sick leave policy will result in disciplinary action.

#### **Employees are required to ensure the medical certificate supporting the illness should include: -**

- a) Is given by a registered medical practitioner.
- b) Bears your name
- c) Signed by General Practitioner
- d) Gives the nature of the illness.
- e) The expected duration of the illness or incapacity
- f) Medical Certificate is furnished to the Administrator
- g) Medical Certificates details are treated confidentially

#### **A medical certificate not containing the above information or certificates that are undated, illegible or otherwise dubious will not be accepted by the Company.**

To apply for Disability Benefit, an employee should obtain a Social Welfare claim form from their doctor or hospital and submit it to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. In the case of long-term illness, a medical certificate, signed by a medical practitioner (details as above) must be provided every week unless an alternative agreement has been approved by the service. Ardfinnan Community Playschool reserves the right to refer an employee to a medical adviser.

#### **Illness during Annual Leave**

If an employee falls sick during a period of annual leave, and produces a doctor's medical certificate, the period of this sickness will be treated as sick leave and not annual leave.

#### **Abuse of Sick Leave**

Abuse of sick leave can lead to disciplinary action.

#### **Accrual of Annual Leave on Certified Sick Leave**

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Employees on long term certified sick leave are entitled to retain annual leave they could not take due to illness. The employee has up to 15 months to take the leave after the end of the leave year in which the leave has accrued. Annual leave is taken while the service is closed to children or as payment in lieu of the accrued leave untaken during illness. [The leave year for calculation is the statutory leave year September to June]

Employees who leave the company within the 15 months are entitled to take payment in lieu of the accrued leave untaken during illness. In the event this is relevant to a staff member the administrator will calculate, as per legislative requirements, and inform the employee of the annual leave due.

### **Significant Sick Absences**

An employee's career in Ardfinnan Community Playschool can be affected if the pattern of absences indicates unreliability in terms of ability to be present at work. A high level of absence due to illness while on probation may result in the termination of the employment contract.

### **Return to Work**

When the employee is fit to resume duty s/he must make contact with the Administrator on the day prior to return to work however where the employee has been out long-term additional notice must be given to allow the service to terminate whatever interim arrangements need to be put in place. A return-to-work meeting will take place with the Administrator following a long absence.

On the morning of their return to work or the previous day an employee will meet with the Administrator to discuss their return to work.

At this meeting they shall discuss

- The reason for the absence from work
- Identify any possible underlying causes of absence that may be important for the employee.
- Identify if there are any health and safety or environmental issues in the workplace causing absenteeism.
- Bring the employee up to date on relevant workplace matters.

The Administrator shall keep a record of the fact the discussion took place where appropriate

### **Recording of Sick Leave**

All sick leave is recorded and stored confidentially

### **Human Resource**

## **WORK PLACE SUPPORTS**

Ardfinnan Community Playschool recognises their duty in adhering to all government policies with regards to staff entitlements, this includes all leave paid or unpaid included in the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023

The purpose of which is to:

Provide for a period of paid time away from work for an employee who has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse and promotes support of all employees

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