

Galway City & County Childcare Committee

Sample Policies and Procedures



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INTRODUCTION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures help to provide a consistent approach towards developing services and to minimise misunderstanding. Policies and procedures also provide a framework for making decisions. By involving staff and parents in the development and construction of policies and procedures there is a sense of ownership and commitment to the documents. To maintain a high standard of good practice, policies and procedures must be reviewed regularly and changed accordingly to incorporate any new developments in the childcare sector.

POLICIES

A policy is a course of action proposed by a service on a specific issue.

PROCEDURES

Policies give rise to procedures, which are the written statements of how the policies will be carried out.

.....

ADMINISTRATION

ADMISSIONS POLICY

It is the policy of _____ Childcare Service that our service is open to all families in our community. We are committed to operating open and fair Admissions Procedures.

Admissions procedures

- ❑ Each child must be at least ____ years when starting at the service
- ❑ Parents seeking to secure a place for their child must complete an enrolment form.
- ❑ A completed enrolment form must be lodged with the service prior to the child attending the service
- ❑ Children will be admitted on a 'first come first served' basis, following submission of the enrolment form.
- ❑ If there are no remaining places a waiting list will be drawn up.
- ❑ Referrals from family support services will be accepted provided there is a place available.

FEE PAYMENT POLICY

Fees are set at the beginning of each year at a rate that takes account of affordability for parents and of the sustainability of the service.

- ❑ The weekly/monthly fee for the service is €xxx
- ❑ Fees must be paid weekly/monthly in advance
- ❑ There is a discount for families where more than one child attends the service
- ❑ Fees must be paid even when the child is absent due to illness, except in special circumstances and with the agreement of the management committee/manager.
- ❑ Fee paying arrangements for holidays, bank holidays etc will be agreed with parents at the time of enrolment
- ❑ Parents will sign a contract agreeing the terms of the fee payment policy.

COLLECTING CHILDREN POLICY

- ❑ It is the policy of our childcare service that children may only be collected by the person(s) named on the registration form.
- ❑ The parent/carer must notify the staff if an alternative named person is to collect the child.
- ❑ Children must be always collected on time.

RECORD KEEPING POLICY

Records as required by the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 will be maintained and made available to parents and any relevant persons, to ensure the health, safety and development of all children attending the service.

Procedures

- ❑ All records in line with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 are kept up to date and accurate at all times.
- ❑ All confidential records are stored securely when not in use.
- ❑ Parent, carers or guardians will be asked to co-sign the medical administration form and accident report form, when necessary.
- ❑ All records written are impartial and factual.
- ❑ Records in relation to Child Protection concerns are stored in a separate locked filing cabinet and are shared only on a need-to-know basis in line with our Confidentiality Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

It is our policy to keep confidential all personal information about the children, families, staff and volunteers involved in our service.

Personal information about families in relation to Child Protection concerns will be shared on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Confidentiality procedures

- ❑ Parents will have access to records kept in the service, but only in relation to their own child
- ❑ All new staff and volunteers will be informed of our confidentiality policy and procedures as part of their induction programme
- ❑ Information held in the service in relation to Child Protection Concerns will be stored in a separate locked drawer and will be shared only on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy and with Data Protection Legislation.

RECRUITMENT

STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

The management committee of _____ is committed to ensuring that our recruitment procedures are fair, open and transparent and comply with relevant employment legislation. Personal information received is dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Staff Recruitment Procedures

Job Descriptions

A detailed job description is prepared before each post is advertised and is available to all applicants. Each job description includes:

- Job title
- Location of the position
- Who the employee will report to
- Overall purpose of the job
- Duties and responsibilities
- Conditions of employment
- Person specification.

The *person specification* outlines:

- Qualifications
- Skills
- Experience
- Other attributes required to carry out the job satisfactorily

Advertising

All posts are publicly advertised in local or national newspapers and state clearly that _____ is an equal opportunities employer. All advertisements include the following:

- Name and role of organisation
- 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
- How to get further information
- Closing date for application
- Equal opportunities statement
- Logos as required

Short listing

A short listing panel with a minimum of three people is set up to review all applications.

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 an 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

e.g. Galway City & County Childcare Committee. Where possible both sexes are represented on the interview panel.

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. 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.

A marking system and score sheet are also prepared.

When the interviews are completed a full report of the interview process is prepared by the interview panel. 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.

Selection Process

The position is offered to the candidate with the highest mark on the score sheet, subject to references being satisfactory.

A reference is always sought from the current or most recent employer. Both referees are contacted verbally by telephone and this is followed up with a written reference.

Photo ID and original certificates of accredited training are sought before the successful candidate signs a contract of employment.

Letters of regret are sent to all unsuccessful candidates within one week of the interviews.

Garda Vetting

Garda Vetting is sought for all employees, volunteers, students and any adults who may come in contact with children in our service.

Contract of Employment

A written contract of employment is prepared for each new employee of

All contracts include:

- Commencement date of employment
- Duration of the contract
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Reporting procedures
- Salary
- Entitlement to travel and subsistence
- Working hours
- Annual Leave
- Details of sick pay
- Information on grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Information on codes of conduct
- Duration of probationary period

Induction

An induction period is provided for all new employees. Employees are provided with

- Information about the role of _____.
- Further information about the employee's new role
- Information on the role of other employees
- Introduction to key personnel and agencies
- Contracts of employment
- Details of conditions of employment
- Details of salary scales
- Procedures for claiming travel and subsistence expenses (if part of conditions of employment)
- Details of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Details of codes of conduct
- Full details of the Policies and Procedures of _____ Childcare Service.
- Employees are obliged to familiarise themselves with the Policies and Procedures of the service and to sign up to codes of behaviour as set out by the service.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT POLICY

The management committee of _____ is committed to promoting the participation of parents as volunteers in the service.

The management committee is committed to ensuring that the recruitment of parents and other volunteers is open and transparent and at all times gives precedence to the safety and welfare of the children attending the service.

Volunteer Recruitment Procedures

Role Description

A detailed description of the role of the volunteer is prepared in advance. This includes:

- Overall role of the volunteer
- Location of the position
- Who the volunteer will report to
- Key area of work
- Duties and responsibilities

Application Form

Each volunteer is required to complete an application form. This form includes:

- Name, Address and telephone number of applicant.
- Previous experience.
- Reason for volunteering.
- Name, address and telephone number of 2 referees.

Interview/Informal Chat

Each volunteer will have an interview or informal chat with representatives of the management committee as part of the Recruitment process.

Garda Vetting

Garda Vetting is sought for all volunteers, students and any adults who may come in contact with children in our service.

Induction

An induction period is provided for all new volunteers. Volunteers are provided with

- Information about the role of the Childcare Service
- Further information about the volunteer's role
- Information on the role of other volunteers and employees
- Details of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Details of codes of conduct
- Full details of the Policies and Procedures of the childcare service.

Volunteers are obliged to familiarise themselves with the Policies and Procedures of the service and to sign up to codes of behaviour as set out by the service.

STUDENT POLICY

It is our policy, to assist students in developing their skills in childcare. Students will work closely with staff, to develop a professional and child-centred approach to working with children.

Procedures for Students on Placement

- All students must be over the age of sixteen.
- As part of their induction, students are requested to read the policies and procedures of the service.
- Students are not included in the adult/child ratio and are never used in place of staff.
- Students are never left unsupervised with groups or individual children.
- Students are supported through regular supervision meetings. Support and information is also provided, if assistance is needed with projects or assignments.
- Manager/Management Committee decides on what information the students can have access to and what meetings they attend.
- Our service has ongoing contact with the relevant college.
- Proof of Garda Vetting for each student is sought from the college

TRAINING POLICY

It is our policy that all staff will have access to ongoing in-service training, to keep them up to date and to develop their childcare and education skills.

Procedures

- ❑ Induction training: All newly appointed staff/students/volunteers are provided with the basic information they need to settle into the job, this includes: health and safety, child protection procedures, conditions of employment, policies and procedures.
- ❑ External training and attendance at conferences/workshops/seminars is supported.
- ❑ At staff meetings, staff are given the opportunity to feed back the information from the conference/workshop/seminar they attended.
- ❑ A training needs analysis is carried out and reviewed on a regular basis, to establish what type of training is required, and if it is relevant to the work, individual and the service.

HEALTH & SAFETY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

It is the policy of our service to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in our service.

We do this by

- ❑ Ensuring that our management and staff avail of training on Child Protection provided by the Health Service Executive and the Galway City & County Childcare Committee
- ❑ Giving parents, children and workers information about what we do and what they can expect from us
- ❑ Making sure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised in accordance with our Recruitment Policies and Procedures
- ❑ Applying for Garda Vetting for all staff, volunteers, students and any adults that may come in contact with children in our service
- ❑ Letting parents know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about
- ❑ Having reporting procedures and a named designated person in place to deal with Child Protection Concerns
- ❑ Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are informed of the Reporting Procedures
- ❑ Developing Codes of Behaviour amongst staff, amongst children and between staff and children. (see Appendix 1)
- ❑ Having procedures on actions to take if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Child Protection Reporting Procedure

- The Designated Person to deal with Child Protection concerns in this organisation is NAME
- Should this person be absent, for whatever reason the deputy Designated Person is NAME
- Should a child make a disclosure to a staff member or volunteer we have clear guidelines as to how that staff member or volunteer would respond. (See appendix 2 Dealing with a Disclosure).
- Any member of staff or volunteer who has a Child Protection concern will discuss their concerns with the Designated Person
- The Designated Person is responsible for the recording of any such concerns

- The Designated Person may consult with the HSE regarding a possible referral as well as making a referral.
- The Standard Reporting Form for such referrals is contained in Appendix 3
- The relevant HSE contact numbers are contained in this form
- In the case of emergency or an out-of-hours situation the Garda should be contacted and those numbers are easily available to all staff and volunteers.
- It is our policy to inform parents/carers about any Child Protection concerns, unless doing so would put the child at further risk
- The appropriate verbal/written communication regarding Child Protection concerns will be made to the HSE without delay.

Staff Allegations Policy & Procedures

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will implement two separate procedures in line with those outlined in the document *Our Duty to Care*:

1. Our reporting procedure in respect of the child
2. A separate procedure with a separate designated person in respect of the staff member/volunteer

(For a copy of *Our Duty to Care* please contact HSE *Children First Information Office* or *Galway City & County Childcare Committee*)

HEALTH POLICY

It is the policy of our childcare service to promote a healthy lifestyle through prevention of illness and establishing healthy eating patterns. It is our policy to comply with current regulations including the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Food Hygiene Regulations.

Healthy Eating

- ❑ A balanced diet is provided with fresh, nutritious food
- ❑ Sweets, crisps, chewing gum and nuts are discouraged
- ❑ Special dietary needs of children are met
- ❑ An adult always sits with the children at meal times to encourage good eating habits, stimulate conversation and enhance the quality of the interaction.

Illness

- ❑ Children or adults with heavy colds or coughs 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.
- ❑ Children of staff working in the service should not accompany their parents to work if they are ill
- ❑ Children with infectious diseases should not attend the service
- ❑ All parents are informed if a child attending the service has an infectious disease

Immunisation Policy

When you enrol your child in our Childcare Service, please complete the immunisation section, in the registration form supplied.

Parents have the right to choose to Immunise their child or not.

Not all children attending this service may be immunised.

In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents will be verbally informed.

A dated notice informing all parents of any infectious disease outbreak, will be displayed on our notice board.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases

Parents are asked to notify this Childcare Service, if their child has been exposed to a Notifiable Infectious Disease. (See enclosed list of Notifiable Infectious Diseases).

Public Health Doctors are responsible for the prevention and control of Notifiable Infectious Diseases.

On being notified of an Notifiable Infectious Diseases, we will contact Merlin Park Hospital at 091-775200, for advice, information and support.

Non Immunised Children

In the case of children not immunised, the parents will be asked to seek advice, information and support from Community Services.

SAMPLE

HYGIENE POLICY

The service is committed to promoting a healthy environment and a high standard of personal hygiene for adults and children. It is our policy to comply with current regulations including the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Food Hygiene Regulations.

Hygiene Procedures

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

- ❑ Hand washing must be carried out after using the toilet, after outdoor play, before and after handling food
- ❑ Cuts and sores must be covered with suitable dressings
- ❑ 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 and sinks are cleaned and disinfected every day and between sessions when there is more than one session
 - Floors, tables and equipment, where necessary, are cleaned and disinfected daily
 - Sand is always covered when not in use
 - All left over food is properly disposed of

HEAD LICE POLICY

Unfortunately, it's 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. It is important to know how to recognise the problem early and to know how to cope with it.

Procedures

- ❑ 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. **(Leaflets on Head Lice from the Health Promotion Unit are to be handed out to all parents).**
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ The importance of not sharing other people's combs, hats etc. is stressed to parents and children.
- ❑ If more advice is needed, the service will contact the public health nurse.

NAPPY CHANGING POLICY

It is the policy of our service and in the interest of the children's health and safety, that staff follow the nappy changing procedures correctly and that a high standard of hygiene is evident at all times.

Procedures.

- ❑ Children's nappies and other items are stored in individual compartments and labelled accordingly.
- ❑ Disposable paper towels are used to cover the mat, and for hand-drying purposes.
- ❑ Disposable gloves are provided and worn during nappy changing, however this does not negate the need for hand washing.
- ❑ Soiled nappies are bagged and disposed of hygienically i.e. sanitising unit or binned and removed from the nappy changing area
- ❑ The nappy changing mat is disinfected after every use.
- ❑ Anti-bacterial soap is provided for hand washing.
- ❑ Children are never left unattended when having their nappy changed.
- ❑ If required another staff member is always available to provide assistance.
- ❑ A cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that the nappy changing area is clean and hygienic at all times.
- ❑ To ensure that nappy changing time is a pleasant experience for the child, staff members use this opportunity to interact with the child and provide one to one attention.

TOILETING POLICY

It is the policy of our service and in the interest of the children's health and safety, that a high standard of hygiene is promoted at all times, when children are learning to use the toilet.

Procedures

- ❑ To create an awareness and understanding of good hygiene practice, staff members do a project with the children about the importance of self-care for example: flushing the toilet, washing hands etc.
- ❑ Anti-bacterial soap and disposable paper towels are used for washing and drying hands.
- ❑ A cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that children's toilets are kept in a clean and hygienic condition at all times.
- ❑ The staff should treat accidents sensitively.
- ❑ Praise and recognition is used when children are being toilet-trained to encourage self-esteem and a sense of achievement.
- ❑ Potties are disinfected after each use.
- ❑ If required, another staff member is always available to provide assistance.
- ❑ The child's privacy is always respected.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Accident and Safety Policy

It is the policy of our childcare service to promote the health, well being and personal safety of all children and adults involved in our service, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety procedures.

Accident Prevention

- ❑ A Safety Statement has been prepared and is reviewed on a regular basis
- ❑ All new staff and volunteers must be familiar with the Safety Statement
- ❑ There are at least two adults on the premises at all times
- ❑ Children are supervised by adults at all times
- ❑ Care is taken to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected
- ❑ When the main entrance is locked the key must remain in the position which is known and accessible to all adults
- ❑ Staff must know which children are present at any one time
- ❑ Furniture and equipment are laid out to minimise safety risks
- ❑ Only suitable and age appropriate objects are available to children

Accident Procedures

- ❑ The First Aid Box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location which is known to all adults [see Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 Appendix C for contents of First Aid Box]
- ❑ At least one member of staff who holds an up to date First Aid Certificate is on the premises at all times
- ❑ Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency
- ❑ Minor accidents will be treated in the childcare premises and parents/carers will be advised of the injury and the action taken, when the child is collected
- ❑ All accidents even minor ones, are recorded in the Accident Book
- ❑ The service has an arrangement with the local surgery in case of an accident or sudden illness
- ❑ In the case of serious accident the senior staff member will phone the doctor and the child's parent/carer
- ❑ 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
- ❑ All accidents must be reported to the insurance company

FIRE SAFETY

- ❑ The service has all the relevant fire safety equipment recommended in the Dept of the Environment's *Fire Safety in Pre-Schools* booklet including fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and fire blankets.
- ❑ The fire safety equipment is checked annually
- ❑ Fire drill instructions are posted in each room
- ❑ The assembly point is clearly marked
- ❑ A fire drill is carried out with the staff and children every month
- ❑ A record is kept of all fire drills carried out

OUTINGS POLICY

It is the policy of our preschool to ensure the safety and well being of the children and adults involved in our service when planning and undertaking outings.

Procedures

- ❑ Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the planning, preparation and undertaking of outings.
- ❑ Prior information about proposed outings is given to all parents
- ❑ All parents must sign a consent form prior to the outing
- ❑ There is always at least one adult to every two children
- ❑ The insurance company is contacted prior to the outing to confirm that the event is covered by the service's insurance policy

CHILDCARE & EDUCATION

CURRICULUM

Childcare service is committed to developing a curriculum that creates a child centred, play based environment which empowers young children to actively pursue their own learning. This process will be facilitated by adults who will provide appropriate, timely, balanced intervention as well as support, continuity and progression to encourage positive attitudes towards learning.

Childcare Service recognises that the establishment of daily routines is essential for all young children in our care. We strive to provide a programme of activities which encourage the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative and language development and of the children who attend the service.

Guidelines – Our Curriculum:

- ❑ Is based on clearly defined aims and objectives
- ❑ Is flexible and open to new approaches and ideas, on how to promote and meet the growing need of children.
- ❑ Recognises that children are learning all the time, and that children learn best when they are actively involved and interested.
- ❑ Includes a variety of activities that provides for the physical development of the children.
- ❑ Includes stimulating sensory experiences (touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell) appropriate to the child's level of development.
- ❑ Encourages children to think for themselves, helping them to make their own decisions and find their own answers to questions.
- ❑ Provides an atmosphere that offers the children suitable challenges and stimulates problem-solving.
- ❑ Encourages feelings of safety, trust and emotional security to the children in our care.
- ❑ Helps children to develop self-esteem by giving them the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning.
- ❑ Encourages at all times, sociability, friendship and co-operation with others, through the provision of co-operative play and the opportunity for children to mix with siblings, same-age peers, younger and older children.
- ❑ Aims to match all tasks with each child's level of ability and attention span

- A range of activities is chosen to reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- We regularly check our books, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Staff have regular meetings to plan and review activities within each area of our facility and to consider the needs of individual children.

Curriculum

Our Curriculum includes a variety of activities that promotes each area of a child's development. These activities include:

<input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative play/home corner	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts & Crafts
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading and Musical activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Play Dough
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative play	<input type="checkbox"/> Jigsaws
<input type="checkbox"/> Sand and water play	<input type="checkbox"/> Constructive and manipulative activities and energetic play

EQUIPMENT POLICY

It is the policy of our service, that the equipment available is suitable, safe and age appropriate, while providing new challenges and experiences for the developmental needs of each child.

Procedures

- All equipment must be kept clean and hygienic at all times.
- Staff members are responsible for the equipment in their playrooms, by ensuring that all equipment is clean, safe and well maintained at all times.
- Equipment is checked regularly for broken parts.
- All equipment purchased is based on the children's developmental needs and interests.
- All staff must have a thorough understanding of the developmental benefits children gain from the equipment.
- All equipment must be age appropriate and suitable to the different stages of a child's development.
- The layout of each playroom must ensure that the equipment is accessible to the children, to promote choice and a sense of independence.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

It is our policy to respect the individuality of all children and adults involved in our service and to promote positive attitudes to differences of culture, ethnicity, gender, language and financial circumstances; and to minority groups and members of the Traveller community.

Equal Opportunities Procedures

- ❑ Recruitment and employment of staff will comply with all relevant equality legislation and with our Recruitment Policies and Procedures
- ❑ The service is open to all families in the community (see Admissions Policy)
- ❑ A range of activities is chosen to reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- ❑ We regularly check our books, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect cultural and ethnic diversity.
- ❑ Special dietary needs of children and adults are catered for where possible
- ❑ We will challenge any statements or behaviour by anyone in the service which are racist or sexist or which reinforce stereotypes; or which are in any other way derogatory to an individual.
- ❑ We believe that parents, children and staff can work together to create an environment where diversity can be valued and shared; and in which every individual can both contribute and learn

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Management and Staff of _____ Childcare Service believe that children should be encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in a suitably planned environment, where they know what is expected of them, and where clear limits are set, appropriate to their age and stage of development and any special needs they may have.

Procedures

- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will always be acknowledged so as to promote the growth of self-esteem and self-discipline.
- The service will strive to manage behaviour consistently in order that children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up good patterns of self-discipline.
- Adults working in the service must be good role models by following codes of behaviour and showing respect for each other and the children.
- Rules that apply to children and adults in the group will be discussed and agreed. These rules will be made known to all adults, staff, parents and children. Rules will be kept to a minimum
- It is recognised that the key to behaviour management is good observation skills in the adults.
- Ongoing discussion, training and practice will be availed of to train staff in the skills of behaviour management.

Positive Strategies for Behaviour Management

- ❑ One to one adult support will be offered to the child that has misbehaved to help the child to see what went wrong and offer possible solutions.
- ❑ Comfort and support will be offered where another child has been hurt in an incident
- ❑ Explanations for challenging unwanted behaviours and attitudes will be made clear immediately to the child/children.
- ❑ It will always be made clear to the child in question that it is the behaviour and not the child that is unacceptable.
- ❑ Staff will use simple language, speaking calmly and quietly to the children when dealing with these situations
- ❑ Staff will demonstrate respect and empathy by listening and being interested
- ❑ By offering alternatives, positive behaviour is encouraged and helps to teach children about the value of compromise
- ❑ Recurring problems will be dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child's parents, and other appropriate adults.
- ❑ Books and activities will be available to help the children explore and name their feelings, where appropriate, in conjunction with an adult.

PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

It is the policy of _____ Childcare Service to promote the active participation of parents in the planning and development of the service, valuing parents as the first educators of their children.

Procedures to encourage parental involvement

- ❑ Regular meetings are held with parents
- ❑ Parents are provided with a handbook giving details of the service before the child starts at the service.
- ❑ Parents are encouraged to be involved in decisions about policies and procedures operated by the service, and any other aspect of the service that affects their child
- ❑ Parents are welcome to visit the service at any time
- ❑ Parents are encouraged to work as volunteers in the service
- ❑ Staff members are available to discuss any concerns a parent may have regarding their child and the service

SETTLING IN POLICY

It is the policy of this service that every effort is made to ensure that the settling in period is as easy and pleasant as possible for the children and their parents/carers.

Settling in procedures

- ❑ Each parent is provided with an information pack about the service before the child starts at the service.
- ❑ Each parent is encouraged to drop in to the service with their child before the child starts at the service, so that the child can become familiar with the other children, staff and the day to day running of the service.
- ❑ On the first day the parent is encouraged to stay with the child until he or she feels comfortable in their new surroundings.
- ❑ Each parent is encouraged to spend as much time as necessary with the child during the settling period. There is no set time limit on the settling in period.
- ❑ No child will be pressurised to take part in any activity during the settling in period.
- ❑ To help staff build a relationship with the child, staff will discuss the child's interests with parents, as well as their likes, dislikes and key words the child uses at home

- ❑ Each parent will be given a daily account of the child's progress during the settling in period.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

It is the policy of _____ Childcare Service to welcome any suggestions, recommendations, comments or complaints made by children or their parents in relation to our childcare service.

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

Complaints procedure

- ❑ Complaints should be made to the manager/leader or a designated member of the management committee.
- ❑ 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 person designated to receive complaints.
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ 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 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.
- ❑ If the parent 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 eg a representative of the Galway City & County Childcare Committee or the Western Health Board.
- ❑ This panel will not include any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant or staff member
- ❑ The panel, having considered all the relevant material and talked with all those concerned, will reach a decision and if necessary, make recommendations.
- ❑ The complainant and other people involved will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 1 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

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 journeys

APPENDIX 2 Dealing with a Disclosure

Should a child disclose to a staff member/volunteer that abuse may be happening in their life, the role of the staff member/volunteer is primarily to listen, asking only open ended questions e.g. is there anything else you want to say?

The staff member/volunteer must share this information with their designated person. They must never promise a child that they could keep such information to themselves, even if a child requested it.

It is never the role of the staff member/volunteer to investigate or to make an assessment of the risk of abuse to a child. The HSE carry out such assessments and the Garda investigate any criminal aspect.

At the appropriate time, the staff member/volunteer will record the disclosure as it happened, quoting the words of the child.

The designated person will implement our Child Protection Reporting Procedure.

Appendix 3 Standard Reporting Form for Child Protection Concerns

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

In case of Emergency or outside Health Board hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Social Worker Team Leader:

1. Details of Child:

Name: _____ Male: Female:
 Address: _____
 _____ Age/D.O.B.: _____
 _____ School: _____

1a. Name of Mother: _____ Name of Father: _____
 Address of Mother if different to Child: _____ Address of Father if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Telephone Number: _____

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

1c. Household Composition:

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Male: Female:

Address: _____

Relationship to Child _____

Occupation: _____

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: _____ School: _____

Public Health Nurse: _____ Gardai: _____

G.P.: _____ Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club

Hospital: _____ Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups,
After School Clubs:

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes No

If Yes, what is their attitude?

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re. Limitations of confidentiality)

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family: _____

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Occupation: _____ Signed: _____

Guidance Notes:

Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children

who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you have any other relevant information or reports regarding this matter, please attach when forwarding this report.

If you are uncertain as to whether you should report your concerns, please telephone the social work department to discuss your concerns. See Appendix 4 for contact details.

APPENDIX 4 Contact details for Social Workers

A duty social work service is available at the Newcastle rd. office (Galway city), telephone number 091 546366/546370, between 10.00am and 12.00pm, Monday to Friday.

A social worker can be contacted at the following offices, between 9.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday as available.

Oughterard office (Galway West) at 091 552200.

Ballinasloe office (Galway East) at 09096 46200.

Loughrea office (Galway South) at 091 847820.

Tuam office (Galway North/Central) at 093 26800.

On completion, please return this form to the Social Work Team Leader at the appropriate address:

Galway city: *Community Care Services, 25 Newcastle Rd. Galway.*

Galway West: *Oughterard Health Centre, Oughterard, Co. Galway.*

Galway East and South: *Ballinasloe Health Centre, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.*

Galway North / Central: *Tuam Health Centre, Vicar St. Tuam, Co. Galway.*