**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre**

**Accidents and Incidents Policy**

**Policy Statement**

All possible precautions and preventative measures 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 the 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.

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.

An 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 The Willow Tree Children’s Centre. State agencies will be notified as appropriate and as required by legislation or regulation.

Upon registration, the playschool will require two emergency contact numbers, addresses and phone numbers. It is vital that these are kept updated. Parents will need to inform the playschool of any revised contact details.

We also require the parent/guardian or carer to sign an agreement on the application form to allow The Willow Tree Children’s Centre provide emergency treatment or hospitalisation of your child if necessary.

**Procedures & Practices**

Preventing accidents, incidents and injuries

The risk of an injury happening is directly related to the physical environment and how this is managed. The level of risk also relates directly to the level of supervision of children, especially while at play, and to the ways in which children are supported to deal with any potential conflict with their peers.

The environment is reviewed and assessed regularly and frequently to ensure that there are no hazards for young children.

Adequate staff ratios are always maintained and team members are assigned specific responsibility for named children to ensure that at least one staff member knows where each child is and what they are doing at all times.

We promote realistic play limits and behaviour limits that guide children’s safety and security rather than curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity.

Safety is ensured and injuries prevented by:

• Supervising children appropriately.

• Regularly checking both indoor and outdoor play areas for, and getting rid of, hazards.

• Using safety equipment for children, such as car seats and seat belts (when travelling), protective helmets and padding, such as for the knees and elbows.

• Providing appropriate soft fall surfaces under climbing equipment.

• Checking for and removing choking hazards in areas where children under the age of three years are present (or any older child who regularly puts items other than food in their mouth).

• Ensuring that no cords are accessible to children, in particular cords on blinds.

• Ensuring that all hazardous cleaning materials are stored in a locked cupboard out of reach of children.

• Ensuring that bars in cots or stairs are no more than 6cm apart for round bars/7.5cm apart for flat bars.

• Keeping all electric cords out of reach of the children.

• Teaching children how to use playground equipment safely e.g. ensuring that another child is not standing near the swing as they are swinging.

• Understanding what children can do at different stages of development. Children learn by testing their abilities. They should be allowed to participate in activities appropriate for their stage of development even though these activities may possibly result in some minor injuries, such as scrapes and bruises. Children should be prevented from taking part in activities or using equipment that is beyond their abilities and that may result in serious injury such as broken bones.

• Ensuring equipment, furniture and materials used by the children are appropriate for use and used in a safe manner.

Children are allowed to engage in risky play and explore the limits of their bodies. While injuries can happen during any type of play, the following are ways to help prevent injuries:

• Opportunities for children to release anger in acceptable ways are provided. Running outside, kicking balls, and other physical play allows children to let off steam. Outdoor play in general helps to keep children engaged and calm.

• Coping skills are taught and reinforced.

• Children are encouraged and supported to express feelings verbally.

• Clear limits are set for children's behaviour. The children are involved in deciding those limits so that they understand their purpose. Parents are made aware of the limits.

• It is explained to a child who is showing aggressive behaviour how the aggressive actions affect the other person.

• A child's aggressive behaviour will be redirected where possible by, for example, engaging the child in play or activity that interests the child. See Policy on Positive Behaviour Management for further detail.

Risk Assessment and Safety Statement

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, risk assessments are carried out regularly to identify any hazards present, assess the risks arising from such hazards and identify the steps to be taken to deal with any risks.

A safety statement is prepared which is based on the risk assessment. All staff members who are responsible for safety issues. The risk assessment and safety statement can be viewed upon request. The safety statement is reviewed by the management on a regular basis. See Risk Management Policy for further details.

Dealing with accidents/injuries

Children are often injured unintentionally during the normal course of a day. Many of these injuries, such as scrapes and bruises, are minor and only need simple First Aid. Other injuries may be serious and require medical attention beyond First Aid.

A 112/999 call or a call to a local emergency number should be made in the case of any of the following:

• You believe the injury is life threatening or there is a risk of permanent injury to the child/adult, for example -

o Severe neck or head injury

o Choking

o Shock

o Chemicals in the eyes, on the skin, or ingested in the mouth

o Near-drowning.

• They are acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.

• They have difficulty breathing or are unable to speak.

• Their skin or lips look blue, purple or grey.

• They have rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and a loss of consciousness (seizure).

• They are unconscious.

• They become progressively less responsive.

• They have any of the following after a head injury: decrease in alertness, confusion, headache, vomiting, irritability or difficulty walking.

• They have increasing or severe pain anywhere.

• They have a cut or burn that is large, deep, to the head, chest or abdomen and/or won’t stop bleeding.

• They have a suspected fracture.

• Severe or persistent vomiting.

• They are vomiting blood.

• Their stool contains blood.

• They have a severe stiff neck, headache and fever.

• They are significantly dehydrated: sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, not urinating.

If a child or adult is bitten by a child:

• First Aid must be administered.

• Where the bite causes bleeding, it is advisable to attend the GP as soon as possible.

• In the case of a child being bitten, the parents/guardians of both children are notified.

**Responsibilities**

Management 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.

The written procedures, agreed by the owner/management committee, are made accessible and each staff member must be made aware of their responsibility to follow the outlined procedure in the event of an accident/incident.

It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that each staff member reads and understands the agreed written procedures.

It is the manager’s responsibility to:

• 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 in each section of the service. 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. See Appendix A for First Aid box contents list.

• 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.

Procedure in the Event of an Accident or Incident

1. Immediate First Aid is to be administered.

2. The person trained in First Aid for Children is to make an initial assessment of the injury to ascertain whether medical attention is required.

3. The child is to remain under continuous adult supervision and be comforted until the child recovers or the child’s parents/guardians or the parent’s nominated carer takes charge of the child. The person responsible for the child at the time completes an incident report form which should be signed by child’s parent or guardian and management.

4. In the case of a more serious accident, the child must not be moved and must be kept warm.

5. If an ambulance is needed the person administering First Aid must ask the manager or designated person in charge to call for the ambulance.

6. The manager or person in charge will contact the child's parents/guardians or, if they can’t be reached, their named emergency contact person to advise them of the incident.

7. The manager or person in charge will arrange for emergency relief cover so that one member of the staff team can accompany the child in the ambulance if necessary.

8. If the child has to go to the hospital before the parents/guardians arrive, an adult known to the child must accompany the child and stay until a parent/guardian arrives.

9. The manager or designated person in charge is to decide which staff member should accompany the child.

10. A parent/guardian is to be asked to sign an accident/incident report form as soon as possible to confirm their notification of the accident/incident.

11. The manager or person in charge will contact the Registered Provider (if he/she is not present at the time) to inform them of the accident/incident and the steps taken.

12. The manager or person in charge will contact the parents/guardians of the other children to advise them of an emergency, and request they arrive to collect their children as soon as they can.

13. The manager or person in charge will ensure that the Accident/Incident Report is completed, shared with parents/guardians and signed appropriately.

**Information is to be shared with parents/guardians only in respect of their own child.**

The accident will be investigated as soon as possible and all necessary corrective and preventative actions to eliminate the risk of recurrence will be taken immediately. Following the investigation, all information will be reviewed to determine if there is a need for a change in policy and/or practice.

It is essential that clear records and any supporting documentary, CCTV or photographic evidence is kept.

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

Maintain an accident/incident report including:

• Name, date of birth and age of the child or adult affected.

• Name of person/s dealing with the accident/incident.

• 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 – see Appendix B.

• Details of notification of the accident/incident to other external party such as:

o Tusla Social Work Services if there is a child protection concern.

o Garda Síochána where there is a danger to staff or children, or a criminal offence.

o Health and Safety Authority where the incident is dangerous or a staff member has been injured as a result.

o 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.

**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.

**Communication of Policy**

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

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parent/Guardian Handbook and the full policy is available on the website www.blennerville.playschool.com

This policy will also be reviewed with staff at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/guardians upon request.

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

Parents/guardians and the staff team will receive written notification of any updates.

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of Pre-school and school-age Services) Regulations 2018.

This policy was adopted by The Willow Tree Children’s Centre on 01st of January 2024.

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

On behalf of Management

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