**Child Safeguarding Statement**

1. **NAME OF SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED**

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre is registered pre-school providing the following services for children aged 12 months to 15 years:

* ECCE Sessional Service
* Full time Childcare Service
* Afterschools for School-Age Children

The management structure is:

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre is managed by a voluntary management committee.

It is comprised of Norma Scanlon Director

Jessica Hastings Director

Elaine Flynn Director

Laura Moriarty Director

Rebecca Ryan Griffin Treasurer

Norma Scanlon Chairperson

Jennifer Bailey Secretary

The everyday management of the playschool room and activities is the duty of the manager, Laura MacKenna. The deputy manager is Lisa Clifton. The deputy 2 is Danielle Berry. The Willow Tree Children’s Centre currently employs 12 staff members .

These are : Laura MacKenna

Fiona Bailey

Leanne O Regan

Hazel Paige

Laura Smith

Lisa Clifton

Danielle Berry

Ora Brookes

Amy Duncan

Anna Matysek

Charis Loo

Michelle Cotter

1. **COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM**

* Our Service is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop.
* Our service believes that the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount. We are committed to child-centred practice in all our work with children.
* We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to, and heard.
* Our policy and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*,DCYA, 2017, *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure*, Tusla, 2018, the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016; Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of Pre-school and school-age Services) Regulations 2018and the *Children First Act 2015*.
* Our policy declaration applies to all paid 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.
* 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**(DLP) for Child Protection:

**DLP:** Laura MacKenna

**Deputy DLP**: Lisa Clifton

**Deputy DLP 2**: Danielle Berry

1. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

In accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, the Board of Management/Service Provider has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the service or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Risk Identified | Policies and/or Procedures in place to manage Risk |
| Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act  2015) of a child by a member of staff/volunteer | Recruitment Policy, Induction policy, Garda Vetting Policy; Staff  Handbook; Code of Practice |
| Garda Vetting- staff have not been re-vetted | Staff Handbook - Garda Vetting Policy, staff to be re-vetted  every 3 years |
| Risk of harm (as defined in the CFA 2015) of a  child by a visitor to the service; | Door locked need to knock for entry. Visitors need to sign in/out  kids will not be unaccompanied when visitors are present. |
| Collection | Collection Policy- only nominated persons are allowed to collect |
| Risk of harm (as defined in the CFA 2015) of a  child on outings by a member  of staff/volunteer/stranger/peer; | Outings Policy; Risk Assessments; Social Stories for Outings; |
| Staff behaviour and malpractice | Code of Behaviour, Code of Practice for staff |
| Risk of harm of bullying of a child by a  member of staff/volunteer/peer; | Anti-bullying policy; Positive behaviour management policy;  Child protection policy; Use of Internet, Photographic and  Recording Devices Policy; Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy |
| Risk of harm (as defined in the CFA 2015) of  a child through the use of unauthorised  photography; | Use of Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy |
| Risk of harm (as defined in the CFA 2015)  of a child through social media/internet use; | Use of Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy |
| Risk of harm to a child due to a failure of  recognition of abuse or to report suspicions or  allegations of abuse to Tusla. | Child Protection Policy; Training in Always Children First Tusla’s  e-learning |

**1.1 Child Protection and Welfare Policy Statement**

At the Willow Tree Children’s Centre we are committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop.

We are committed to child centred practice in all our work with children and full compliance with Children First and Our Duty to Care.

We recognise the right of children to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them.

Management, staff, volunteers and students in this service recognise that the welfare of children is paramount. As required by the *Children First Act 2015* and *Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children*, 2017 the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place

and our service will endeavour to safeguard children by:

* Having procedures to recognise, respond to and report concerns about children’s

protection and welfare

* Having a confidentiality policy
* Having a code of behaviour for management, employees, students and volunteers
* Having a safe recruitment and vetting procedure
* Having an Induction Policy (which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policies and procedures)
* Having procedures for managing/supervising employees, students and volunteers
* Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents
* Having a procedure to respond to complaints
* Having policies for managing outings, accidents and incidents and social media and internet safety
* Having procedures to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect against staff members.
* Maintaining a list of mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015

As part of the policy the Willow Tree Children’s Centre will :

* Appoint both a Designated Liaison Person for dealing with child protection concerns and

a Deputy

* Provide induction training on the Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Children First Elearning (to be completed on a yearly basis) to all staff, volunteers, students and members of the board of management
* Ensure that staff attend child protection training as appropriate
* Provide supervision and support for staff and volunteers in contact with children
* Share information about the Child Protection and Welfare Policy with families and

Children

* This policy will be shared with parents on enrolment with our service
* This policy will be reviewed each time an incident is reported or every 2 years if that is sooner, by the Blennerville Communty Playschool Staff and amendents if appropriate issued to all staff and families.
* Work and cooperate with the relevant statutory agencies as required.

**1.2 Overall Responsibility of all Employees, Board Members, Volunteers and Students**

Although the Designated Liaison Person (see section 2) has a lead on issues relating to the

protection and welfare of children, it is the responsibility of all service personnel to ensure

the safety, protection and well-being of children in the care of the service. All staff,

management, students and volunteers are required to read, understand

and sign off on the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. It is expected that if staff,

or volunteers have any questions about the policy or its implementation they

speak with the Designated Liaison Person.

We will ensure that all personnel:

* Are aware of their responsibilities and their obligations under Children First
* Are aware of their responsibilities for reporting concerns and/or incidents regarding the

safety or well-being of children to the Designated Liaison Person

* Attend child protection training as appropriate
* This policy is applicable at all times when children are in the care of the service, including on

day trips and outings.

* This policy must be observed by:
* Staff, Special Needs Assistants ; Students; Visitors and Volunteers and Families enrolled at the Willow Tree Children’s Centre Where a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) attends a service with a child they are subject to the Child Protection & Welfare Policy of the service. They may also be subject to their employer’s Child Protection & Welfare Policy. It is recommended that the SNA is provided with the same induction in relation to child protection and other staff members and volunteers.

**1.3 Definition of a Child**

For the purpose of this policy, a ‘child’ means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

**2. Role of the Designated Liaison Person**

2.1 Children First requires that every organisation providing services to children appoint a

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for reporting neglect or abuse. The DLP is responsible for

dealing with child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with Children First and Our

Duty to Care.

The Deputy DLP will be appointed by the manager to undertake the below duties when the DLP is on leave or is unavailable for a long period of time.

Designated Liaison Person Laura MacKenna

Deputy Designated Liaison Person Lisa Clifton

Deputy Designated Liaison Person 2 Danielle Berry

Director / Emergency contact Jessica Hastings

**The Role of the DLP is to:**

* Provide information and advice on child protection and welfare concerns and issues to the staff of the service
* Be accessible to all staff
* Ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments
* Ensure that the Child Protection and Welfare Policy and procedures of the service are followed.
* Be responsible for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of children to

TUSLA – Child & Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána

* Ensure that appropriate information is included in the report to the Child & Family

Agency and that the reported is submitted in writing (under confidential cover) using the

Standard Report form (see Appendix (i)).

* Liaise with the Child & Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate
* Keep relevant people within the organisation informed of relevant issues, whilst

maintaining confidentiality

* Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the service,

the liaison with other agencies and the outcome

* Advise the organisation of child protection training needs
* Maintain a central log or record of all child protection and welfare concerns in the service

**3. Recognizing, Responding and Reporting Concerns about a Child’s Welfare or Possible**

**Abuse**

3.1 Recognising Concerns

* Staff and/or volunteers may at times be concerned about the general welfare and

development of children they work with and they can discuss any concerns with their manager and/or Designated Liaison Person at any time.

* All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in

Children First (see Appendix (ii)) and the signs and symptoms of abuse (see Appendix

(iii)).

In accordance with Children First:

* Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in

contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

* The Children and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has

reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of

being abused or neglected. Child protection concerns should be supported by

evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.

* A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the

children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the Child and Family Agency.

**The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:**

(i) the safety and well-being of the child must take priority

(ii) reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency.

* Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response.

Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.

* Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

‘A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by – (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.’

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

**3.2 A concern could come to your attention in a number of ways:**

* A child tells you or indicates that she/he is being abused. This is called a disclosure (see

Appendix (iv)) for guidance on responding to a disclosure from a child)

* An admission or indication from the alleged abuser
* A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the

children are unidentifiable.

* Information from someone who saw the child being abused
* Evidence of an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be

caused in any other way

* Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
* An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but an innocent explanation is

Given.

* Concern about the behaviour or practice of a colleague.

All Personnel are expected to consult Children First and the Child Protection & Welfare

Practice Handbook for detailed information on the signs and symptoms of abuse.

**3.3 Procedures for Responding to a Child Protection or Welfare Concern**

* Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending Child & Family Agency intervention. In the event of an emergency and unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.
* If the child has made a disclosure, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made
* If there are reasonable grounds for concern (see Appendix (V)) the DLP will complete the Standard Report Form without delay and send it to the Duty Social Work Team in the Child and Family Agency (See below for contact details).

Duty Social Work Team, Tusla – Child & Family Agency

**Kerry Duty Social Work Team**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Address | Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Kerry Community Services, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry. |
| Phone | 066 7121566 |
| Office Hours | 9am - 5pm |

An Garda Síochána

Tralee Garda Station

**Address:**New Road, Tralee, Co. Kerry

**Phone:** (066) 7102300

* If the concern is urgent and the child is in immediate danger, the report to the Child &

Family Agency will be made by telephone and followed up with the completed Standard

Report Form.

* In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána
* The DLP may use the process of informal consultation with the Duty Social worker to discuss the response to a child protection & welfare concern and whether or not it warrants reasonable grounds for concern. Informal consultation is carried out without providing the name of the family or the child. If advised to do so, a formal report will be made.
* The DLP will record information about the concern, informal consultation (if carried out) and details regarding if and when the parents were informed.
* Community Services/Services with a Voluntary Management Committee: Where there is a voluntary management committee in place, the chairperson is informed each time a referral or report is made under the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. In accordance with the confidentiality policy no identifying information is included when informing the chairperson.
* Other Services: If the owner is not the DLP they are informed when a referral or a report is made under the Child Protection and Welfare Policy.
* Duty Social Work :A list of all the duty social work teams can be accessed here:

http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker

**Procedure when a referral is not made to the Child & Family Agency**

* Not all concerns will meet the reasonable grounds for concern. In this case, the concern

and any informal consultation will be documented and kept confidentially and securely.

The DLP will inform the member of staff, volunteer or student who raised the concern

that it is not being referred in writing, indicating the reasons. The DLP will advise the individual that they may make a report themselves or contact the Duty Social Work Team and that the provision of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 will apply.

**3.4 Informing Parents about Child Protection and Welfare Concerns**

Good communication with parents is very important in ensuring best outcomes for

children and any concerns about the health and well-being of a child will always be

discussed with parents from the outset.

When a child protection concern is being reported to the Child& Family Agency, good

practice indicates that parents should be informed about the report unless doing so

may put the child at further risk. The DLP may seek advice from the Child and Family

Agency Social Work Department in relation to this.

**3.5 Responding to a Retrospective Disclosure by an Adult of abuse as a child**

In relation to retrospective disclosures, it is imperative that all child protection concerns

are examined and addressed. An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. If a staff member becomes aware of a retrospective concern they should follow the reporting procedure and speak with the DLP. If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the service should report the concern to the Children and Family agency without delay.

**2 The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides protection from civil liability and** penalisation by an employer where reports are made to designated officers in the HSE or to An Garda Síochána reasonably and in good faith.

* Information about relevant support services may be provided to the adult if appropriate.

**4. Confidentiality Statement**

* The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of the staff in statutory and voluntary organisations involved with children to share and exchange relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.
* All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect should be shared on ‘a need to know’ basis in the interests of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
* No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled taking full account of legal requirements.
* Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. They are not intended to limit or prevent the exchange of information between different professional staff with a responsibility for ensuring the protection and welfare of children. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
* It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

**5. Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees**

5.1 Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees, Students or Volunteers

When developing procedures for dealing with allegation of abuse or neglect against

employees it is recommended that services seek legal advice and/or Human Resource

Management advice.

* Note that Employee includes all ancillary staff , students and volunteers
* The protection and welfare of the children in the service are paramount and their safety

and well-being is the priority. However, the service also has a duty and responsibility, as

an employer, in respect of its employees. It is important to note that there are two

procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an

employee:

1. Reporting procedure in respect of any child protection and welfare concern

2. The procedure in respect to the allegation against the employee

It is recommended that two different people are nominated to manage each procedure. In

small staff teams it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the

parties.

* In general, it is the Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for reporting the matter to the Child & Family Agency (as per the reporting procedure) while the employer is responsible for addressing the employment issues.
* If the concern meets the reasonable grounds for reporting then it should be referred without delay to the Child & Family Agency.
* To be reported to the Child and Family Agency the allegation must meet the reasonable grounds for reporting of a concern, informal consultation with the Child & Family Agency may be used to determine if reasonable grounds are present.
* All staff and volunteers in the service should be aware of who to contact should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any employee in the service.
* Written records are very important: If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure should be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it. Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written record of the allegation should be made and a written statement should be sought from this person.
* Where an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee while executing their duties, an employer should privately inform the employee of the following:

1. The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
2. The nature of the allegation.

The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond; the response should be

noted and passed onto the Child & Family Agency with the formal report.

* All stages of the process should be recorded.
* An investigation may be required and the policy should note who will carry this out, the time involved and any appeal process. In small staff teams, independent, external parties may be called upon.
* Whether or not the matter is being reported to the Child & Family Agency, the employer is always informed of an allegation of abuse or neglect against an employee.
* Confidentiality: It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest

confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required

under the procedures within the policy.

* Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures should

be adhered to. It is very important to note protective measures are intended to be

precautionary and not disciplinary.

* The employer should maintain regular and close liaison with the Child & Family Agency

and or An Garda Síochána and ensure that no action by the service frustrates or

undermines any investigation.

* Further action will be guided by employment legislation, the contract of employment,

the other policies and procedures of the service (including the disciplinary policy) and

the advice of the investigating agencies.

* It is recommended that services always seek legal advice when dealing with allegations

of abuse or neglect against an employee.

**5.2 Parents and allegation of abuse or neglect against employees**

* Parents have the right to contact the Child & Family Agency to report an allegation of

abuse or neglect about the employee or service.

* Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be kept

informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.

* If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed their parents will be informed

immediately.

**6. Record Keeping**

6.1 Record Keeping

* Under the Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006, accurate and up to date records in relation to children, staff and service provision are kept. The Early Years (Preschool) Inspectorate has access to files for inspection purposes.
* Parents may have access to the files and records of their own children on request but may not have access to information about any other child.
* Only employees involved with a particular child should have access to confidential files.
* Records are stored in compliance with 2006 Child Care Regulations.
* Where there are child protection or welfare concerns, observations/records will be kept on an ongoing basis and information shared with the Child and Family Agency as appropriate. It is important to note where these will be recorded and stored.
* Procedures are in place for archiving records.
* All records should be managed in line with the service Data Protection Policy

6.2 Photographs

All children are enrolled formally at the Willow Tree Children’s Centre and as part of the registration process parents consent to photos been taken ; shared on [www.blennervillecommunityplayschool.ie](http://www.blennervillecommunityplayschool.ie) and [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) /the Willow Tree Children’s Centre as group photos of the children at work. As part of Aistear and Siolta photographic and video evidence is required to be captured and stored securely providing evidence of a high quality curriculum and service. Parents can choose also not to have their children photos sent via weekly updates and those wishes are captured on the registration form and adhered to by staff. Official photographs may only be taken in a planned manner in which the programme team, the group/schools, and the children / parents have given their informed consent.

**7. Code of Behaviour**

At the Willow Tree Children’s Centre our Code of Behaviour is an important part of a Child Protection and Welfare Policy as it sets out the standard expected from all employees and explains what is acceptable and what is not when employees are working with children.

We use the Code of Behaviour to:

- Explain to new staff how we work with children and what is acceptable

- Explain to parents what they and their child can expect from employees in the service

- Create a shared understanding of best practice

- Challenge an employee when practice is not at an acceptable standard

- Challenge parents when behaviour in the service is not acceptable

- As a Training tool

***Child Protection Policy – Code of Behaviour***

* The Willow Tree Children’s Centre staff will work with children to provide safe spaces for children, ensuring they are safeguarded, physically and emotionally, in a healthy learning environment where meaningful participation is encouraged
* The welfare of the child is paramount and therefore we adopt child-centred practice in all decisions, activities and programmes involving children at The Willow Tree Children’s Centre
* Amongst our team we utilise a strength-based approach (recognizing areas individuals excel at, and delegating tasks accordingly) and distributed leadership (shared, collective and extended leadership practice that builds the capacity for change and improvement) which facilitates the level of collaboration and trust amongst our team.

**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre expects all those working with children to:**

**•** Actively listen to the child, taking account of their expression of needs and concerns.

• Value and respect children as individuals.

• Involve children in decisions made about them, in as participative and appropriate a manner as possible.

• Encourage and support children with praise and positive due regard.

• Encouraging children to express themselves

• Working in partnership with parents

• Promoting positive behaviour

• Valuing difference

• Implementing and adhering to all relevant policies to keep children safe

• The Code of Behaviour is given to all staff and volunteers at induction and it is expected

that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the code and that they will raise any questions arising with their line manager.

• All employees have a duty to adhere to the Code of the Behaviour and to bring breaches of the code to the attention of their line manager. Breaches of the Code of Behaviour are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

***Code of Practice***

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre does not accept the following behaviours and will intervene to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all children:

• Bullying.

• Violence.

• Sarcasm, name-calling, ‘slagging’, and other forms of scapegoating.

• Favouring some to the exclusion of others.

• Abusive language or gestures.

• Negative criticism of children’s values, beliefs and opinions.

• Negatively highlighting physical, social or emotional differences.

***Required Standards of Behaviour.***

These standards are the requirements of the Willow Tree Children’s Centre for all those working with children to avoid situations that might give rise to unjustified allegations of abuse. The standards are good practice and must be followed by all staff, facilitators, volunteers, members, council and other individuals coming into contact with children at the Willow Tree Children’s Centre.

1. Be sensitive to risks of personal safety and the possibility of unfounded allegations that can arise. Never request or agree to meet with a child alone.
2. When meeting children, always leave the door to the meeting room open and ensure another member of the staff/facilitation/volunteer team is present. Always offer the option to a child to have a friend present at any meeting.

3. Do not give lifts in cars to individual children alone. Always have another member of the staff present. Ensure your insurance cover is adequate for this

4. Be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over-involved or spending excessive time with any one child.

5. Monitor any physical contact between yourself and children, ensuring that at all times contact is appropriate to a particular task and verifiable. Do not offer hugs, pats on head or massages.

**6.** Always make sure that there are sufficient staff/facilitators/volunteers available to:

* Ensure maximum safety, participation, learning and fun in activities.
* Anticipate and control disruptive behaviour by children by setting clear boundaries and maintaining a group contract.

7. When dealing with disruptive individuals on a one-to-one basis, always ensure you are accompanied by another member of the staff/facilitation/volunteer team. All instances of disruptive behaviour are to be reported in staff meetings. If disruption risks the safety of either yourself or the group you should contact the Designated contact immediately and provide a written report.

We recognise the importance of a Code of Behaviour between staff and children as

recommended in Our Duty to Care. Our Code of Behaviour is kept under regular review.

The Code of Behaviour supports all staff and volunteers to have a clear understanding of

what is acceptable with respect to their behaviour with children.

* We recognise that children have an equal right to our service provision in line with the

Equal Status Acts and the National Disability Strategy.

**8. Facilities :**

Washing and toilet areas should be adequate to meet requirements of staff and children. A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure that adequate and suitable sanitary facilities are provided within the building – Childcare regulations 2006.

**9. Outdoor Activities**

1. Outdoor activities must be suitable for the age, development and needs of the children.

2. All teachers and instructors must be adequately qualified and insured.

3. Written parental/guardian consent for outdoor activities is required and is obtained as part of the registration process.

4. All equipment must be checked for safety before each activity.

5. First Aid facilities must be made available. Each leader/facilitator should check this in advance and ensure they have sufficient access. All staff are first aid trained at the Willow Tree Children’s Centre and refresher training is completed every 2 years.

**10. Child Protection Policy – Parental Involvement**

A full copy of the Willow Tree Children’s Centre Child Protection policy is made available for downloading the Willow Tree Children’s Centre website (www.blennervillecommunityplayschool.ie).

All parents and children involved in the Willow Tree Children’s Centre are given a copy of the Child Protection Statement, which refers to the full Child Protection Policy and can also be accessed through the Willow Tree Children’s Centre website .

Parents / carers of children are informed of programmes and all related concerns in information about programme activities sent with the parental consent form.

In any event which requires information to be shared with the HSE or the An Garda Siochana, parents should be notified unless doing so is likely to endanger the young person.

Information about the Willow Tree Children’s Centre and its activities is available through its website (www.blennervillecommunityplayschool.ie). Information leaflets and notices are also available, which will be sent out to parents with the Parental Consent Form.

Parents are reminded and encouraged to contact Laura MacKenna at the Blennerville Community Playschool for any further queries.

**11. Safe Recruitment**

* We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected in line with the Service

Recruitment Policy and the Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006. The following will be undertaken:

- Development of job description which outlines the qualifications, skills and

- Advertising vacancies externally and as widely as practicable

- Requesting candidates to supply personal information on an application form

- Interviews will be conducted by more than one person. It is the responsibility of experience needed for each post the interview panel and not one individual to appoint staff/volunteers

- All processes should be consistent and transparent. (i.e. interview questions )

- Prior to an offer of employment being made, two references from previous employment will be obtained and verified by the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

- Prior to commencement of position, proof of identity including address (passport, driving licence or ID card) will be requested and kept on file.

- Prior to commencement of position satisfactory Garda Vetting will be in place for all staff or volunteers.

* Any child protection and welfare concerns that arise through the recruitment process

should be dealt with through the reporting procedures as outlined in Section 3

* All new appointments should be subject to a probationary period for a stated period and

a review meeting held before the post is confirmed.

* All employees will be provided with an employment contract.

**Personnel File**

An up-to-date and accurate personnel file is kept for each member of staff that includes the

following records:

* proof of identity and that the person is over 18 years of age
* proof of satisfactory Garda Vetting
* two validated references, including a reference from the most recent place of

employment

* verification of qualifications
* Investigation of any gaps in employment

**12. Induction, Training and Supervision/Support**

Induction for new employees, students and volunteers:

* As part of the induction process, all new management, staff, volunteers and students

will be briefed on all the elements of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy including

the ethos of the service, child centred practice and the Code of Behaviour, within the

first week of employment.

* All management, staff, volunteers and students will be required to commit to and abide

by the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. They are required to confirm that they have

read and understand the Child Protection and Welfare Policy with their signature.

**Training on Child Protection:**

* The DLP and deputy DLP will be released to attend Always Children First Training and/or

other relevant training as identified and we will ensure that the DLP and Deputy DLP

attend child protection training every 3 years.

* All management, staff and volunteers will be encouraged to attend child protection and

other relevant training as identified.

* Staff will be provided with information in relation to particular skills training to encourage professional development and best practice.

**Staff Supervision and Support**

* Regular supervision and support is available to staff and volunteers, through one to one

meetings or group meetings.

* Staff will be supported while dealing with a child protection concern and outside support

will be sought where necessary, the costs of this will be borne by the company.

**Employee Assistance Scheme:**

Dealing with child protection and welfare concerns can be very challenging and can impact

practitioners in different ways. Employee assistance programmes (such as those provided

by health insurance providers) offer confidential support and counselling to employees on

issues affecting any aspect of their personal or professional life. For examples of such

schemes see VHI, Laya Healthcare.

**13. Responding to Complaints**

10.1 Policy Statement:

We work in close partnership with parents by seeking their views and encouraging parents to

participate in any decision making in relation to the service. We welcome comments/suggestions on the delivery of the service.

10.2 Procedures for Responding to a Complaint

* We undertake to ensure all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly,

impartially and confidentially.

* We will endeavour to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with

parents and members of staff as appropriate.

* Parents will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation as part of

enrolment/intake.

* If we find that we have made a mistake or that something could have been done better

we will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in future.

* Complaints can be made by parents, guardians and other advocates on behalf of

children.

* If a parent is not satisfied with any aspect of the service they are requested to resolve

the issue informally through discussion with the room leader /owner /manager.

* If the problem persists, re-occurs or the parent is not satisfied with the response, the

complaint should be put in writing to the Chairperson of The Management Committee @ blennerville.playschool@gmail.com.

* Most complaints are resolved at this stage. However if there are other or more serious

issues arising from the complaint or it cannot be resolved then both sides may agree

the need for a third party to mediate in relation to the complaint.

* Written records of discussion and agreements made will be kept of this meeting and

copies made available to parents, room leader, or other involved staff (as appropriate).

* All complaints will be dealt within in a timely manner.
* Depending on the nature of the complaint Disciplinary procedures may also be

followed.

* If a complaint is made to the Early Years/Pre-school Inspectorate about any aspect of

this service we will co-operate fully with the Inspectorate to resolve the issue.

**14. Management of Day Trips/Outings from Service**

**14.1 Policy Statement**

This service aims to provide children with a varied and wide experience and from time to

time the service may organize day trips and outings. It is our policy to ensure the safety and

well-being of children during these activities through planning, risk assessment, management and supervision of the activity.

* Children will be appropriately supervised at all times and the relevant adult/child

ratios maintained.

When organising activities / visits staff, facilitators and volunteers must ensure:

* The physical and emotional safety of all children concerned is paramount.
* A clear programme of activity should be designed and shared with the participants.
* Children and Parents must have regular input into the programme and should have the opportunity to provide feedback throughout and at the end of the activity / visit through regular meetings and evaluation.
* All facilities and activities should be checked for appropriateness and risk prior to booking.
* Written Parental/Guardian consent is required for those activities involving children less than 18 years of age.
* Emergency contact numbers, dietary and medical requirements are required for each participant. (See Parental Consent Form).
* Clear information on the activity must be made available to parents / guardians beforehand to explain the programme, travel arrangements, emergency contact details and requirements in a ‘things to bring’ list.
* Staff, facilitators and volunteers should ensure, in so far as is reasonable, that buildings, equipment and facilities are safe.
* Staff, facilitators and volunteers must ensure that sleeping

and washing areas are adequate.

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**14.2 Child Protection Policy – Code of Behaviour for Outings**

• Emergency contact information for participants, activity providers, accommodation and the Willow Tree Children’s Centre management must be checked and recorded prior to the activity taking place.

The childcare act does refer to the adult:child ratio in caring for children which will influence the activities that will be carried out in the preschool setting.

• Adequate insurance coverage for all activities must be checked and secured. At the Willow Tree Children’s Centre as part of the ECCE and Childcare regulations insurance is renewed annually.

**14.3 Managing Emergencies and Critical Incidents**

* A first aid box will be brought and a person with a First Aid certificate will be present
* The person in charge will have access to the service mobile phone in case or emergency
* The service does its up most to minimize risk and ensure the safety of all children at all

times. However, it is important that staff are prepared for any emergencies that may

arise and in this regard, a plan to deal with emergencies (such as critical incidents or an

incident involving a missing child) will be developed for each outing. Staff will be

reminded of any relevant policies and procedures prior to the day trip.

**15. Dealing with Accidents or Incidents**

Blennerville Community Playschool Accidents and Incidents

15.1 Policy Statement

It is our policy to promote the health, well-being and safety of all the children in our service

through the implementation of robust policies and procedures and by developing and

regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety. Although we adhere to

all safety precautions and guidelines, accidents may occur.

15.2 Responding to an Accident or Incident

* We will ensure that all personnel are aware of emergency numbers and that they

prominently displayed.

* We will ensure that all relevant personnel have up to date First Aid Training and that

a complete First Aid Box is accessible.

* The safety and welfare of the child is always the first consideration if a child is

injured or an accident occurs.

* After an accident, as soon as practicable, the accident Report Form is completed and

recorded in the accident book/log.

* The manager is always informed of accidents or incidents.
* Parents /Career are always informed of incidents or accidents involving their child and

requested to sign the relevant form. For children who have a childminding book which goes home to the parents daily information about the accident /incident will also be documented in the book.

* The Manager will review the accident and incident reports regularly.

**16. Social Media Policy**

At the Willow Tree Children’s Centre we use social media – facebook as an additional tool for communication with parents and families. Social media is only used to provide generic updates on camp enrolments; ecce places; awards. Individual information ( age ; name ; address; dob ) about staff or children is not published on facebook. In accordance with our safeguarding statement, access to social networking sites is not permitted such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter; gaming sites and virtual worlds such as Club Penguin, Moshi Monsters and the Sims; video sharing sites such as YouTube; and blogging sites such as Tumblr.

Facebook is used to :

* Communicate with the wider community.
* Market the service
* Provide information to parents and the wider community.
* Provide information on awards received by the Willow Tree Children’s Centre children or staff.
* Laura MacKenna , Manager of Blennerville Community Playschool and Lisa Clifton, Deputy Manager are the only social media administrators at the Willow Tree Children’s Centre who have permission to publish / share information on facebook for the Willow Tree Children’s Centre. All posts are verified prior to publishing.
* Children in the service will not be engaged with on social media.
* In relation to Facebook, children in the service will not be “friended”.

**Consent & Images**

* Consent is required from parents before an image of a child can be used and this is obtained as part of the registration process.
* All Images of children are covered by Data Protection Legislation.
* We Never post an image of a child with identifying information
* Children are appropriately dressed before posting any image / close ups are avoided.

**Service events**

* Parents are not allowed to photograph or video children at Blennerville Community Playschool.

**17.  *Internet Safeguarding***

*The staff of The Willow Tree Children’s Centre are familiar with the risks and dangers of the internet* and the connections between social media use and negative outcomes. We have put some controls in place to ensure that

*Supervision*

*We keep the computer, tablet and smart TV in the preschool/afterschools room where the screen can always be seen by staff. We inform the children that their activities on the computer are supervised.*

*We access the internet with the children as much as possible. We check our internet browser history to make sure they have been accessing suitable sites**. Access to social networking sites is not permitted such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter; gaming sites and virtual worlds such as Club Penguin, Moshi Monsters and the Sims; video sharing sites such as YouTube; and blogging sites such as Tumblr.*

*We endeavour to* create a healthy culture by agreeing on basic usage rules together, e.g. time limits and places of use (adults need to model these rules), by *keeping an open dialogue, keeping the communication lines open and cultivate an interest in children’s online activities—their favourite Web sites, online games and interests, and discuss what they are doing. We talk to the children about the benefits and dangers of the Internet, about responsibility and we have to be able to trust them that the information they are accessing is suitable for the ages of the children within the setting.*

*Protect your computer*

*Youtube restricted mode is enabled on all devices. We use a content filtering system attached to our broadband service. This is an essential and integrated element of the broadband service that is provided to schools by the Schools Broadband Programme. The purpose of Content filtering is to ensure (in so far as possible) that inappropriate websites and content are not accessible from within schools.*

Mobile Phones

Mobile Phones are not permitted in the preschool/afterschools room.

Internet Rules

We have a comprehensive list of rules displayed in the preschool/afterschools which children and staff are aware of.

18. **Communication Plan [For staff & families]**

All parents/guardians are to be informed of this policy and procedures on enrolment. 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. When a complaint is received, the person making the complaint will be given a copy of this Policy and Procedures.

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 must be observed by management and all staff members.

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 reviewed and adopted by The Willow Tree Children’s Centre on 1st January 2024.

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

On behalf of Management

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V92Y510

**Contact Telephone Number:** 066-7122765 Or 085 2808034

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**Website:** www.blennervilleplayschool.com

**Registered Proprietor:** Jessica Hastings

**Person in Charge:** Laura MacKenna

**Deputy Person in Charge**: Lisa Clifton

**Deputy Person in Charge 2**:Danielle Berry