**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre**

**Policy on Recruitment**

**Definitions/Glossary**

Employee in an early years service - A person who enters into or works under a contract of employment with the registered provider.

Unpaid worker in an early years service - A person who works in the service but who is not remunerated for such work by the registered provider.

Verify - A process to check or prove the legality or accuracy of a document

**Policy Statement**

All recruitment, selection and promotion carried out in this service is in compliance with employment and equality legislation, and is informed by quality evidence-based human resource practices. The aim is always to ensure the selection of the best candidate possible for whichever post is to be filled.

All processes are fair and transparent and all appointments are made on merit and in an open and accountable manner.

All necessary steps are taken to ensure that children are protected, as far as possible, in the recruitment and selection processes, and The Willow Tree Children’s Centre fulfils its duty of care in relation to the safe recruitment and selection of all those who will have access to the children. This includes requiring appropriate Garda/Police Vetting and written references in accordance with Children First.

Successful recruitment depends on finding people with the necessary skills, attributes, experience and appropriately recognised qualifications to carry out their roles competently, and the ability to make a positive contribution to upholding the service’s operating principles and values and meeting its goals.

**Equal Opportunities**

Selection of applicants is based on the applicants having the relevant qualifications, skills, competencies and experience to meet the requirements of the post, without bias on grounds of gender, marital or family status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, race or membership of the Traveller community (Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004).

Positions are open to all suitably qualified applicants who satisfy the educational and experience selection criteria relevant to each specific post. Applicants who meet the selection criteria have equal access to the selection process.

**Garda/Police Vetting**

The Registered Owner/All Management Committee Members and Directors, the Manager and all employees of this service will each have two references taken up and will also be appropriately Garda/Police Vetted. Garda Vetting is renewed every three years.

All other persons who work in the service such as contractors, students and volunteers will be appropriately vetted to ensure that children are protected at all times. Parents/guardians who go on occasional outings and/or who work in a supportive role with the service are not required to be vetted as they will not have unsupervised access to children other than their own.

(See Appendix A for guidance on essential competencies of early years care and education staff.)

**Procedures & Practices**

**Job description**

All posts must have:

• A standard job description (see information in Appendix B) outlining the functions and objectives of the role, responsibilities and expectations, and minimum qualifications;

• A person specification of desirable attributes, skills and competencies associated with the job (see appendix C)

• Details of terms and conditions of employment.

**Advertising**

Recruitment advertisements will contain nothing of a discriminatory nature and will aim to encourage applications from the broadest possible base. They will comply with all relevant legislation including the Equal Status legislation.

**The application process**

All applicants must be given a comprehensive job description, person specification, information on the terms and conditions of employment, a Garda Vetting form and appropriate background information on the post, at application stage.

All candidates will be required to submit a fully completed standard application form or an up-to-date curriculum vitae detailing their education, training and employment history. (The advertisement for the post will specify which is required.)

Any identified gaps in an applicant’s education/ training/employment history will be investigated.

False or misleading information given on the application, Garda Vetting form or medical form may be considered a breach of trust and may lead to non-appointment, disciplinary procedures or may prevent the employee being confirmed in post.

**Shortlisting for interview**

Candidates are selected for interview based on the objective requirements of the post and those with relevant qualifications and experience at the level of the post, based on the job description and person specification, will normally be selected for interview.

All applicants are screened and replied to within 30 working days of application. Candidates who clearly best meet the requirements of the position, based on their application, are brought forward to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Should the number of applicants who meet the basic requirements of the post be too large to interview all of the candidates, then further shortlisting may be required giving preference to those candidates who, on the basis of the quality of their application, are most likely to succeed at interview stage.

**Methods of assessment**

All those who apply for a position are assessed on the following:

1. Application Form/Curriculum Vitae

2. Interview (See Appendix D for interview process and Appendix E for interview scoresheet.)

3. Satisfactory identity confirmation

4. Satisfactory reference checks

5. Satisfactory Garda/Police Vetting

1. Application form / Curriculum Vitae

Applications/ CVs are assessed at the shortlisting stage to determine whether the applicant meets the essential requirements for the position. The quality of the application may also form part of this assessment.

2. Interview

Prior to interviews, an interview panel is convened to agree the interview format and core areas of questioning. This panel normally comprises three people (always a minimum of two people) with at least one external. A competency-based, weighted marking scheme in line with the Job Description and Person Specification will be drafted and agreed.

A member of the interview board who has a personal or professional relationship to an applicant must declare that relationship to other members of the board and a decision will be taken by the registered provider/owner/committee as to whether their participation as an interviewer is appropriate.

Candidates invited for interview are informed of the time, date and venue for interview in writing as early as possible.

Before the interview is completed the candidate is informed of the next step in the process.

The shortlisted candidate from the interview process is informed of The Willow Tree’s interest but also informed that a formal offer will only be made when satisfactory reference and Garda/Police Vetting information are obtained.

All candidates are informed of the outcome in writing within 30 working days.

3. Confirmation of identity

Prior to an appointee taking up any post their identity must be confirmed against some statutory documentation (such as a passport, driver’s licence, public services card or ID card), which gives their full name, address, signature and photograph. A copy of the ID will be kept on file.

4. Reference checks

An applicant must submit names of two referees who will be contacted by management in confidence, one of whom must be a current employer if the person is employed or the most recent employer if not.

Where the applicant has been employed in the early years sector, a reference will be sought where practicable.

In the case of internal applicants who have been employed in this service for five years or more the registered provider or management of this service, as their employer, can provide a reference.

Where a reference from a previous employer is not available, references will be sought from other reputable persons . Character references will not be obtained instead of appropriate employer references.

It is the responsibility of management to check references and to ensure that they are satisfied as to the character and suitability and relevant experience of the candidate prior to any person being appointed or allowed access to a child in the service.

All referees must be contacted in person/by phone in order to:

• Either obtain a verbal reference, which must be documented on a reference verification form, signed and dated by management and recorded confidentially on the employee’s file; or

• Verify a written reference from the referee. The referee is asked to confirm that they authored the written reference. The reference, once verified, is signed and dated by the registered provider or management.

References will only be obtained from a current employer with the candidate’s permission and after all other references have been taken up.

Board members and Directors of the Board are required to have two written, validated references.

5. Qualifications

Each person appointed to work directly with children must either hold the appropriate minimum qualifications for the post or a confirmed exemption under the Grandfathering Clause or the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). Appropriate minimum qualifications and exemptions can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/297c05-early-years-recognised-qualifications/>.

Qualifications are verified by viewing the original certificate, a certified copy of the certificate, the original transcript or certified copy of the transcript. Management will document that the appropriate document has been verified.

6. Garda Vetting

All applicants must submit a properly completed Garda Vetting Form when an offer of position has been made. Police vetting must be submitted when an offer of a position has been made and where a person has worked in a state or country outside of Ireland for 6 consecutive months where it is practicable to do so.

The Willow Tree Childrens Centre reserves the right not to appoint an applicant if any unacceptable previous criminal conviction/s record, prosecution/s (successful or not, pending or completed), or a query related to their identity comes to light and/or was not disclosed at application stage.

If we find someone has a criminal record it doesn’t automatically mean they will be unsuitable.

We need to consider:

• The nature of the offence

• How long ago it took place

• Its relevance to the job

• The risk to children if it were to be repeated

Motoring offences, for example, may not need to be a prohibition to an offer of employment unless the job involves driving the children.Where a vetting disclosure is received which causes concern regarding a candidate, we would undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to determine the suitability of the candidate for employment.

It is essential that all adults who work with the children in the service are suitable, therefore those who are recruited through employment schemes such as the Community Employment Childcare Training and Development Programme (CE) are required to undergo a thorough selection and assessment process in the same way as other employees.

Please note: Further important detailed information from Tusla on qualifications, references and Garda/Police Vetting is included in Regulation 9 of Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Canvassing

Canvassing – that is, making an approach to secure advantage – is an unacceptable practice and may lead to disqualification. However, it is entirely reasonable for a candidate to seek information about The Willow Tree Childrens Centre. This contact is not part of the interview process and candidates will not be advantaged or disadvantaged by such contact.

Following selection

All employees will be given a written statement of their terms and conditions of employment on application where possible and at least within two months of commencement of employment.

All employees are given an information pack and a copy of the Staff Handbook on commencement of employment.

**Probation**

All new employees are on probation for the first six months of employment.

A review of the employee’s performance must take place with the employee at the end of the probation period. The manager must set standards and goals and the candidate must be clear on the service’s expectations.

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre (the employer) reserves the right to extend the probation period if appropriate or terminate employment during this period should the employee prove unsuitable for the post. Probation periods may be extended to compensate for extended absences during the probation period.

No employee will be confirmed in post until the registered provider/ management committee receives a satisfactory report in writing from the manager on their performance at the end of the probation period. The employee will be informed in writing as to the outcome at the end of the probation period.

**Induction, supervision, support and training during probation period (see Staff Training Policy)**

All new employees must be given induction training on commencement of employment with The Willow Tree Children’s Centre. The employee is required to sign the induction checklist confirming they are happy that all areas listed were appropriately covered.

During the induction period, new staff members will be required to familiarise themselves with all of the service’s policies, procedures and statements. All staff members will receive regular support and supervision to enable them to perform their role effectively.

**Contracts of service**

• Careful consideration must be given to the type of contract offered to prospective employees. A written contract will be issued appropriate to the position.

**Contract of Employment**

The Contract of Employment will include the following:

• The employee’s name, address and telephone number.

• Their date of birth, photographic proof of identity confirming that they are over 18 years of age.

• The name and telephone number of the employee’s next of kin to be notified in an emergency.

• The date of commencement in the service.

• The job description to include role and responsibility.

• Terms and conditions of employment.

**Record keeping**

• A Personnel Records file must be opened and maintained for each employee of The Willow Tree Children’s Centre (Organisation of Working Time Act 1997). Staff members may have access to their own personnel files.

• The Willow Tree Children’s Centre will keep:

o References, Garda vetting and police vetting for a period of 5 years after the person starts working in the service. This includes current staff and staff who are no longer working in the service

o All other records on ex-employees for at least three years. After three years the files are reduced and only essential information is retained in accordance with GDPR requirements.

• Paperwork on candidates who were unsuccessful at interview is kept in accordance with GDPR requirements.

• Personnel records are stored in a confidential folder in a locked folder the office in accordance with GDPR requirements.

• All confidential personnel information is disposed of safely by management following required retention periods, by shredding.

**Communication Plan**

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

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

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

**Related Policies, Procedures and Forms**

* Inclusion Policy
* Staff Training Policy
* Staff Supervision Policy
* Policy on Staff Absences
* Induction Policy and Procedures
* Child Protection Policy and Procedures
* Confidentiality Policy
* Record Keeping Policy
* Garda Vetting Form
* Application Form

**References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation**

• Tusla: Quality Regulatory Framework

• Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

• Registrations, Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla

• Our Duty to Care: The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People

• National Vetting Bureau, An Garda Síochana

• NPCC: ACRO Criminal Records Office, International Child Protection Certificate (UK)

• UK Government, Disclosure and Barring Service

• Barnardos Vetting Service

• Early Childhood Ireland Garda Vetting

• Equal Status (Amendment) Act 2012

• Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Early Years Recognised Qualifications.

• National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

• Department of Children and Youth Affairs: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education

• Children First Act, 2015

• NERA: The National Employment Rights Agency

• Recruitment and Retention: A good practice guide for early years, Childcare and play work providers Sure Start DES, 2003

This policy must be observed by all registered providers, managers and all staff members.

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

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

On behalf of Management

**Address:** The Willow Tree Children’s Centre, 96 Carraigbeag, Clogher Fáilí, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

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

**Email address:** blennerville.playschool@gmail.com

**Website:** www.blennervilleplayschool.com

**Registered Proprietor:** Jessica Hastings

**Person in Charge:** Laura MacKenna

**Deputy Person in Charge**: Lisa Clifton

***Appendix A***

**ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES OF EARLY YEARS CARE AND EDUCATION STAFF**

A crucial element in providing quality early years care and education services is the knowledge, skills and competencies of the staff team members.

The quality of the early years care and education service and the programme is directly linked to the skills and competencies of the staff members.

The early years’/childhood professional is one who:-

 Takes delight and interest in how children learn and develop

 Acknowledges, appreciates and provides support for the unique role of parents/carers in their

children’s lives

 Acknowledges play as the main medium through which young children learn

 Demonstrates enthusiasm when offered opportunities to obtain new knowledge & skills that providessupport for children’s development and learning

 Models the positive behaviours and attitudes that are valued in childhood

 Sees negative behaviour as an opportunity for a child’s learning and development

 Celebrates diversity that occurs amongst children, their families and their community

 Asks for help, observes and learns from others and welcomes constructive criticism

 Engages in reflective practice to address personal beliefs and values that may influence his/her ownattitudes and beliefs

 Is accountable for own actions

 Demonstrates respect for children and families and understands the need to maintain confidentiality

 Communicates clearly, respectfully and effectively with children and adults

 Responds to challenges and changes with positivity, flexibility, perseverance and cooperation

 Expresses his/her emotions in healthy and productive ways

 Appreciates and nurtures resilience, determination, risk taking, imagination, creativity and play in

children

 Displays a professional manner at work and in all interactions with others

 Demonstrates a team player attitude

List of skills and competencies for varying positions <https://www.ncn.ie/index.php/information-resources/proposed-skills-competencies-framework-for-early-years-professionals>

***Appendix B***

**Job Description**

**Name of Employer:**Blennerville Community Playschool T/A The Willow Tree Children’s Centre

**Address of Employer:** 96 Carraigbeag, Clogher Fáilí, Tralee, Co. Kerry

**Job Title:** Early Years Assistant

**Job Purpose:** To assist in the day-to-day running of the childcare service including planning and implementing activities, safety and risk assessments, engaging in care practices, cleaning and providing opportunities for the children that will enhance their physical, emotional, linguistic and intellectual development.

**Accountable to:** Management and Room Leaders.

**Key Areas of work:**

 To assist the leader in providing a high-quality childcare service. Please note that mainly, the position will be in the preschool and afterschool room. However, a degree of flexibility will be involved as we may at times need staff to work in the baby room. We will always take staffs preferences and strong points into account but due to the nature of the job and our climate, we need flexibility also.

 To implement the curriculum of the pre-school alongside the leader.

 Assist the leader in planning and implementing the daily/weekly routines and activities.

 To provide a safe environment where children can access play and learning opportunities.

 To play an active role in the day to day running of the playgroup and become involved in programme planning.

 To assist the play leader in encouraging parental involvement, fundraising, networking and help in all record keeping on a daily and weekly basis.

 Assisting the rest of the team in the supervision of children during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.

 To set up and assist in clearing away and deciding upon play activities for the day and becoming part responsible for the care and maintenance of all equipment ensuring it meets Health and Safety Standards.

 To provide opportunities for the children that will aid their physical, emotional, linguistic and intellectual development.

 To promote the welfare and protection of children in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 and Children First Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

 Observe children and record observations.

 To undertake in any training as considered necessary by management.

 To attend and participate in team meetings on an ongoing basis.

 Participate in relevant training as requested by leader and/or management and also from your own initiative.

 Participate in quality improvement initiatives such as Siolta National Quality Framework alongside the leader and other staff.

 Familiarise yourself with and follow the policies and procedures and written records of the service.

 Familiarise yourself with the Pre-School Regulations 2016.

 Be aware of the policies and procedures of the service and adhere to these.

 Participate in support and supervision with leader on an ongoing basis.

 Respect the principle of confidentiality at all times regarding the children, their families and other staff.

 Familiarise yourself with and follow the procedures outlined in the Children First Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 in relation to child protection concerns.

 Report any child protection concerns to leader/designated child protection officer.

 Identify and bring to the attention of the leader any health and safety concerns you have.

 Any other duties that may be assigned by management.

Blennerville Community Playschool is an equal opportunities employer and acts within the scope of the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004.

***Appendix C***

**Person Specification for Early Years Assistant**

* FETAC Level 5 Certificate in childcare (Minimum or equivalent).
* A minimum of two years experience in an early years setting.
* Good communication skills
* Team Player
* Knowledge of relevant legislation and regulations
* Respect confidentiality at all times of the children, their families and other staff members
* Garda Clearance
* Manual Handling
* Great Interpersonal skills with co-workers and parents
* Time management
* Current First Aid Certificate
* Record keeping
* Good Observation Skills
* Critically Reflective Practitioner
* Knowledge & understanding of child development
* Knowledge & understanding of inclusive practices
* Commitment to quality
* Good knowledge and understanding of health and safety issues and legislation relating to childcare services
* Appreciation of need for strict confidentiality
* Honesty and reliability
* Willingness to work flexible hours, engage in training and fundraising out of normal working hours

***Appendix D***

## SAMPLE EARLY YEARS CARE AND EDUCATION ASSISTANT INTERVIEW PROCESS

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

**PANEL:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Venue:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The three priority competency areas are as follows:

1. *Professional Development – Education and Qualifications*
2. *Knowledge of Area -; Child Protection; Experience of Community-based settings*
3. *Teaching Ability / Competence - Suitability to work with young children; Interacting with Parents*
4. *Interpersonal Skills - Ability to work as a team member under direct supervision with appropriate effectiveness and respect.*

# Chairperson of the panel (Name)

Introduce the panel.

Ensure candidate:

* Has received all relevant information.
* Understands the nature of the job and the conditions of employment.
* Understands how the interview will run (first general questions, then team performance questions, then practice questions, then closing).
* Understands the process of decision-making thereafter.

**General questions** (Name of panel member who will ask these questions)

* *Tell us about yourself and any personal skills or attributes you have that make you suitable*
* *Can you tell us about your qualifications, do you have up to date first aid, manual handling, infectious disease control, haccp*
* *Can you tell us about your previous experience – and/ or specify with children with additional needs/ afterschools/ preschool/ babies*

# Knowledge of the Area

* *Knowledge of legislation relevant to early years settings – health and safety, child protection*

# *As we are community-run, would you be willing to engage in fundraising activities outside of normal working hours?*

# Teaching Ability / Competence

* *How would you promote the participation of a child who is unwilling to engage? What strategies have you used in the past?*
* *What methods of keeping records and observations are you familiar with?*

**Interpersonal Skills**

* *An irate parent comes to the door upset about an incident the previous day, how would you deal with this situation?*
* *Give an example of your involvement in a team. What role did you play and how do you think others on the team would describe your performance?*

**Chairperson**

* Are there any questions you would like to ask us or anything you would like to say that you did not have the opportunity to say earlier?
* Would you be happy to be on relief panel if unsuccessful for position?

**Summary**

When you will notify them of outcome.

Thank you and Goodbye

***Appendix E***

**EARLY YEARS CARE AND EDUCATION ASSISTANT – INTERVIEW SCORE SHEET**

**Area Notes Mark**

Personal Development / Qualification

Knowledge of the Area

Teaching Ability / Competence

Interpersonal Skills

**Total**