**The Willow Tree Children’s Service**

**Risk Management Policy**

## Definitions/Glossary

A **hazard** is anything with the potential to cause injury or ill health, for example chemical substances, dangerous moving machinery, or threats of violence from others.

**Risk** is the chance that someone will be harmed by the hazard. It also takes account of how severe the harm or ill health effect could be and how many people could be affected.

A **Risk Assessment** is ‘… a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.’

It is a written document that records a three-step process (HSA, 2016):

1. Identifying the hazards in the workplace(s) under your control.
2. Assessing the risks presented by these hazards.
3. Putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of these hazards causing harm.

A further two steps are also required:

1. Recording findings and implementing them.
2. Reviewing the assessment and updating it if necessary.

**Severity** is a measure of how serious an injury or health effect could be, as a consequence of unsafe working or of an accident. The severity can be influenced by the environment, the number of people at risk, and the steps already taken to control the hazard.

**Control measures** are the steps to be taken to remove the hazards, or at least reduce the risk of them causing harm to as low a level as possible.

A **Safety Statement** is the written commitment to managing safety and health in your business and how you are going to do this.

**Individual risk assessment** is an assessment of the potential risks that might occur in relation to a child and their individual needs. It is completed if the individual needs of a child warrant it, for example, a child with allergies, medication requirements or difficulties relating to their behaviour. An individual risk assessment provides an input to a child’s Individual Care Plan and is kept in the child’s individual record (see [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/)).

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all service staff members and all service activities.

Regular risk assessments are carried out to identify risks to: any child attending the service; their parents while accessing the service; any adult working in the service; or any visitors to the service in relation to:

* The governance of the service;
* The health, safety and welfare of each individual;
* The safety of the service; and
* The premises being safe, suitable and appropriate for care and education of children.

Risk assessments are carried out involving all relevant parties (including children and their parents/guardians if appropriate) and the risk assessment records show who is involved. A notice is displayed to make parents and guardians aware that records of risk assessments are available to view at any time on request.

Each risk assessment details the following:

* The potential risk being assessed;
* The current controls in place to address the risk;
* Any additional controls needed to reduce the risk; and
* Those responsible for implementing the additional controls.

**Individual risk assessment**

An individual risk assessment for a child will be developed where required and all relevant parties will be involved.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Job descriptions include safety and health responsibilities, and safety and health performance is included in staff supervision (see Recruitment Policy and Staff Supervision Policy).

All staff members work to maintain a safety and health culture in our team and in our service and implement a clear Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

**Accidents and Emergency Planning**

Procedures are established to respond to accidents and emergency situations, and to prevent and minimise the safety and health impacts associated with them as required by Section 11 of the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Legislation/Acts/Safety_Health_and_Welfare_at_Work/)

*See Fire Safety Plan, Safety Statement and Critical Incident Plan.*

**Records Management and Review**

All risk assessments completed are documented, recorded and reviewed annually or more frequently if warranted.

Risk management records are kept for three yearsand our Risk Management system is reviewed as part of our annual review.

Procedures & Practices

*Risk Management is the responsibility of all staff but the responsibility lies with Management to document the risks, controls and preventative measures. Risk Categories:*

#### Governance

* *Recruitment*
* *Staff Support and Supervision*
* *Supervision of Children*
* *Confidentiality*
* *Staff absences*
* *Record Management*

#### Health Welfare and Development

* *Children Arriving and Leaving*
* *Challenging Behaviour*
* *Play Indoors*
* *Play Outdoors and Risk Managing Skills*
* *Use of the internet, photographic and recording devices.*
* *Infection Control*
* *Nappy Changing and Toileting*
* *Sleeping and Resting*
* *Medications*
* *Food (including allergies, choking hazards)*

Safety

* *Outings*
* *Fire Safety*
* *Use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices*
* *Outdoor Play Structures*
* *Waste Disposal*
* *Accidents and Incidents*

*Premises*

* *Building (including access and egress, windows, doors etc.)*
* *Parking Area (if relevant)*
* *Kitchen*
* *Equipment*
* *Toys and Materials*

*Risk assessments must be carried out at regular intervals for all risk-associated activities and areas in the setting. The safety, health and welfare of all children, all staff team members and all visitors to the setting must be considered.*

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

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

On behalf of Management

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