**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre**

**Policy on Staff Absences**

**Definitions/Glossary**

Absences - For the purposes of this policy, absences include annual leave, unpaid leave, statutory leave, training leave or leave due to illness or emergencies.

**Policy Statement**

Our service will always ensure well-planned, adequate and appropriate staffing levels when core staff members have to be absent for any reasons including illness; annual leave, unpaid or other statutory leave; leave for training/continuing professional development (CPD) or any other reasons. Our primary consideration is the emotional and psychological needs of the children in our care.

The manager is Laura MacKenna, when she is absent for any reason, Lisa Clifton will deputise for the person in charge when the person in charge is absent for any reason. In the event that both the person in charge and the named deputy are absent, Danielle Berry will deputise.

Appropriate Garda Vetting, references and proof of appropriate qualifications are sought for any person providing relief staffing cover.

The staff roster will always reflect staff members’ absences and substitutions.

The Staff Absences Policy will be reviewed at least annually.

**Procedures & Practices**

**How the adult:child ratio is maintained.**

• Staff know the required adult: child ratios for each room based on the ages of the children

• Required adult: child ratio is implemented

• Staff roster is implemented

• Staff members know what to do in the event of the adult; child ratio not being met due to a staff absence. Consult with management immediately to request cover.

**How the service responds to staff absences: both planned and unplanned.**

Staff members are required to notify management of any unplanned absences (such as Sick Leave, Force Majeure Leave or Bereavement Leave) as soon as possible via phone call. Email notifications will not suffice. When returning to work, they should consult with management and submit any documentation deemed to be necessary e.g. a doctor’s certificate may be required for certain conditions to ensure they are no longer contagious before they return to the service. Staff should not attend if they have symptoms of a viral infection.. (See Infection Control Policy and necessary exclusions of staff members with infectious illness.)

In relation to planned absences, link this policy to the Staff Training Policy and outline what the arrangements are for providing staff cover when staff members request or are required to attend training during normal service hours or are taking time off in lieu of training time.

(If you have a Staff Leave Policy, link this policy to it and outline the requirements for staff members to plan their Annual Leave or any other planned leave (such as Parental Leave, Carer’s Leave) with sufficient notice to allow the management to plan appropriately for staffing cover).

**Procedure for contacting relief staff**

Management ensure that any person providing relief cover must meet the qualification requirements, be appropriately Garda/Police vetted and have the required written references. The recruitment policy is followed and management ensures that they have appropriate records on file for any persons providing relief.

The needs of the children are paramount in The Willow Tree Children’s Centre, especially the youngest children – we aim to ensure consistency of care and we recognise and facilitate as far as is practical at least one staff member whom they know and are comfortable with, wherever possible, when planning for providing relief cover. This is particularly important for young children’s emotional and psychological wellbeing, especially when the absent staff member is their Key Person. It is also especially important during their earliest months in the service when they will already be experiencing the challenges of adapting to some very significant changes in their lives.

**How the staff roster shows staff absences and substitutions.**

Any changes in staffing (absences and substitutions) are reflected in the roster, and added to the Absences/ Holidays file which is stored safely and confidentially on managements encrypted USB.

**Communication Plan**

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Staff Absences 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 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 in the Policy Folder located in the office.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request. Parents and all staff members will receive written notification of any updates.

**Related Policies, Procedures and Forms**

• Policy on Illness Prevention and Infectious Disease Control

• Risk Management Policy

• Recruitment Policy

• Staff Training Policy

• Supervision Policy

• Child Protection Policy

• Key Person Policy

• Partnership with Parents Policy

• Staff Leave Policy

…add any other policies, procedures or forms that you have, which you consider are linked to this policy.

**References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation**

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

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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