**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre**

**Staff Training Policy**

The Staff Training Policy must identify and address the training needs of employees and unpaid workers.

The aims of this policy are:

* To outline this service’s commitment to full induction for new staff members and ongoing staff development and training thereafter.
* To ensure that staff development and training needs are identified and are well-planned for, well-resourced and organized efficiently and effectively with appropriate staff ratios maintained at all times.
* To ensure that all staff members are aware of the service’s procedures for applying for training, that all requirements are met and that all staff members have equal access to appropriate training and development opportunities.
* To link the performance and staff development to the achievement of the service’s operational and strategic goals and objectives, and its commitment to continuous improvement and quality service provision.

## Definitions

*Staff development* - Includes what is commonly called ‘continuing professional development’ or CPD and is the broad term used to include all activities that are undertaken by and for staff members in order to maintain, update and enhance their work related knowledge, skills and competencies. (See Appendix A for essential competencies of early years staff.)

*Induction* - The process by which new staff members are introduced to their colleagues and working environment as well as supported and helped to familiarise themselves with the service’s policies, procedures, practices, ethos and culture.

The term induction is also used in this policy for the process of familiarisation with the service that is provided for new management committee members.

*Study leave* - Leave required for a training/learning event that will prevent the individual member of staff from undertaking their normal duties. Study leave includes leave for training courses, conferences, seminars, workshops and any specific learning opportunities arranged either internally or with other organisations.

*Training events* - These are generally activities that have an educational or developmental purpose and which lead to the acquisition of skills or knowledge relevant to an employee’s current or future role at The Willow Tree Children’s Centre. Training events, as referred to in this policy, are primarily short training sessions/days/courses for skills and/or knowledge development, but may also include attendance at conferences, seminars or some designated meetings

Policy Statement

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre aims to be a learning environment, which supports both individual and team development. Access to quality induction and ongoing training and development opportunities prepares staff members for both existing and future roles and responsibilities and helps them to reach their full potential thereby enhancing the quality of their practice.

A structured approach is taken to induction for new staff team members to ensure consistent and accurate communication about the service’s policies, procedures, statements, regulatory requirements. Students and volunteers are also inducted to the service’s policies, procedures, statements, and operations. Students who work with the children will be under the supervision of appropriately qualified and experienced staff members at all times.

All new management committee members/directors are provided with an appropriate induction on joining the committee.

All staff members regardless of age, grade, gender, ability/disability or ethnic background or the nature of their contract of employment are expected to undertake staff development and training, which is viewed as a continuous process throughout their time in the service.

Where specific policies are updated or amended, or a new policy is added, all staff members will be provided with training to ensure familiarity with the most up to date service policies.

This policy demonstrates The Willow Tree Children’s Centre’s commitment to the development of staff members’ awareness, knowledge and competencies through allowing time off for, and/or meeting the expenses of, relevant training courses, conferences, external meetings, participation in the local provider network or other such relevant educational events.

All applications for study leave shall be considered by the Manager/ Management Committee and may only be approved after taking into account both service needs and budgetary commitments.

This policy applies to all staff and has been developed to ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity to attend learning and development events for all staff.

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre encourages its staff members to undertake any other training or activities which aid their personal or professional development. Due to funding limitations it may not always be possible for the service to provide funding to staff members to undertake such training.

All staff members also have regular supervision meetings and an annual appraisal within which to formally review their practice and training needs (see Staff Supervision Policy).

Records are kept on each staff member’s personnel file of all training events attended and courses completed while employed in this service.

Procedures & Practices

**Induction for new staff members**

The main purposes of the induction process for new staff members are:

* To introduce them to children, families and colleagues prior to commencing work.
* To make them aware of any specific needs of any child who will be in their care.
* To clarify *The Willow Tree Children’s Centre* Statement of Purpose and Function.
* The legislative requirements and guidance documentation applicable to the service, including:

- [Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2013/act/40/section/92/enacted/en/html).

- The [Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print).

- Child welfare and protection legislation and national policies, including

[Children First Act](http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2015/a3615.pdf) (2015) and [Our Duty to Care](https://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_Full_Eng.pdf) (2002).

* To familiarise them with the service’s Safety Statement.
* To familiarise them with the service’s Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy.
* To familiarise them with the service’s essential policies, procedures, routines and approach to quality and to the service’s organisational structure.
* To explain the curriculum/programme approach used in the service and how play and learning experiences at *The Willow Tree Children’s Centre* are planned, implemented and evaluated.
* To clarify their roles and responsibilities (including record management) and those of others in the service.

The induction process is tailored to the needs of each individual new staff member, student or volunteer and the length of an induction period will depend on the experience, qualifications and role of the new staff member.

*You need to include the following information here:*

* ***Management*** *will carry out the induction programme and senior staff members are qualified to take on the possible roles of mentoring, coaching or shadowing the new staff member.*
* ***I****nduction will take place at the beginning of employment and continuously throughout the probation period. Some of it will be while working with the children, other aspects will be at times when members of staff can have time away from the children.*

The manager is responsible for assessing each new staff member’s learning outcomes from the induction process through observation, feedback and reflection.

The induction programme will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is still meeting the needs of new staff members and the service overall and will be amended if needed.

Appendix B gives guidance for induction for new staff members.

**Ongoing training and professional development for staff members**

On an ongoing basis all staff members, including the person in charge/manager, are required to undertake certain training which is considered necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the service.

All staff members are also required to assume responsibility for their own development and training, which includes both participation in planned activities and making use of opportunities to learn when they are presented.

Staff development and training is an obligation for management who is responsible for identifying individual training and development needs and supporting and encouraging the staff team members.  
   
Formal processes – induction, supervision, appraisal and training needs analyses – are used at the individual level and planning for staff development and training is carried out by the management in consultation with staff members at both individual and team levels.

Overall accountability for staff development and training rests with management *at every level including the Management Committee where relevant.*

Staff development and training provision will be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure that it is of good quality, relevant, effective and provides value for money.

It is the responsibility of management to ensure that trainers are competent (have the knowledge, skills, abilities and relevant qualifications where required) to give the training required and external trainers have the appropriate accreditation/certification to provide the required training.

**Supervision of students**

Students/Trainees who work with the children are at all times under the supervision of an appropriately qualified staff member. They are supported and supervised by appropriately experienced members of staff to assist them to carry out their duties to promote and protect the wellbeing, learning and development of the children (see Supervision Policy).

**Access to training for staff members**

Staff development and training priorities will be reviewed by Management *who* have responsibility for staff development and training policy and practice. Training and development plans will be reviewed and approved annually by *Management.*

Training priorities will be decided on the basis of the current and evolving needs of the children and families who use the service, the agreed plans and aims of the service, and ongoing developments in the early years sector related to legislation and quality practice.

Existing qualifications, skills and competencies of the staff members and planned developments at the service will also be considered when prioritising training needs.

**Finance for training and staff development**

The budget for staff development and training is administered by *the Management Committee.* These funds are allocated to support the service in the achievement of its agreed objectives.

**Types of training and development opportunities provided**

* Induction Process
* Termly Team Meetings (See Communications Policy)
* Supervision (See Staff Support and Supervision Policy)
* Annual Appraisals (See Staff Support and Supervision Policy)
* Individual and Group Training Events/Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (Seminars, Workshops, Conferences, Tailor-made and Accredited Courses)
* Mentoring/Coaching
* Participation in a local Providers Network

**Follow up to training**

Staff members may be requested to complete a short report on any training event which they have attended. The purpose of this is to highlight key benefits and knowledge gained and to provide any further useful information.

*Management* is responsible for evaluating the impact of learning and development provided for staff members throughout the year, that is, to discuss the learning, assess improvements to performance as a result of the training and ensure that learning is shared with colleagues. This is to ensure that opportunities are being identified appropriately and the added value of the training that staff have participated in can be assessed.

**Study leave**

When regular, trained staff members are away during hours of operation, appropriately qualified staff must be available to cover their work.

*In all cases consideration must be given in advance to the identified training priorities, the time required, the cost and availability of relief staff, the available training budget and equal opportunities.*

*Members of staff may not take study leave without obtaining the Manager’s/Management Committee Representative’s written approval prior to the leave required.*

*Paid time off and time off in lieu (toil) should be agreed in advance of any attendance at training events.*

*Learning priorities should be discussed between the manager and the staff member and specific learning objectives agreed. Priority will be given to learning activities (including courses) which are relevant to the objectives of the applicant’s current role.*

*Where attendance at appropriate training events (short courses, conferences, etc.) has been approved in writing, staff members are entitled to paid study leave during normal working hours.*

*Where the request is for a long-term course (e.g. to gain a professional qualification), requests for time off will be negotiated on an individual basis. All requests for time off must be discussed with the line manager/management committee who must give due consideration to issues of equity and consistency when agreeing to release any member of staff.*

*A post course evaluation form should be completed.*

*Part-time staff who take part in study leave that exceeds their daily contracted hours will be paid up to the full-time hours for that day, or, alternatively, it may be agreed that time off in lieu (toil) is given. Before any toil is agreed it must be established whether relief staff are available to cover the hours.*

*All staff members requesting study leave should apply in writing using the attached form (see Sample Form attached).*

*Application Forms should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the start of an external training course.*

**Records and record keeping**

Training records for all staff members will be maintained by the service subject to General Data Protection (GDPR) requirements.

Records of Certified/Accredited training are held on each staff members file.

## Communication Plan

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Illness Prevention and Infectious Disease Control 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.blennervilleplayschool.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 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,

Ground Floor Unit,

96 Carraigbeag,

Clogher Faili,

Tralee,

Co. Kerry

V92Y510

**Contact Telephone Number:** 066-7122765 Or 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.

[*Here provide a list of the essential professional competencies for early years care and education staff. The following are useful sources of information for this:*

* [*Skills & Competencies Framework for Early Years’ Professionals*](https://www.ncn.ie/index.php/information-resources/proposed-skills-competencies-framework-for-early-years-professionals) *(Crann & NCN, 2016)*
* [*CORE, Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care*](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED534599.pdf) *(*European Commission*,*2011*)*]

***Appendix B***

**GUIDANCE FOR INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

A good reception is important so it is essential to ensure that arrangements are made for a new staff member’s arrival to make them feel welcome.

The length of an induction period for a new staff member is likely to depend on the experience, qualifications and role of the new staff member.

Spreading out the induction period ensures that new staff members are not overloaded with information all at once.

Break down the induction into what the employee needs to know and do on the first day, the first week and within the first few months of their start date.

Students and volunteers must also be inducted to the service’s policies, practices and operations.

Induction should include:

* Introductions.
* Showing the employee where everything is and what happens in each area.
* Explaining how they will fit into the setting and the team.
* Health and safety information.
* Information about the service, its Statement of Purpose and Function (including its mission, vision and its values).
* Legislative and regulatory requirements including the Early Years Regulations, Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013), Children First Act (2015) and Our Duty to Care (2002)
* Going through all of the service’s Policies and Procedures.
* What the job will involve and what is expected from them.
* A statement of the terms and conditions of their employment.
* Pay and leave arrangements.
* An agreed training plan.

Induction should be tailored to the individual rather than using a standard approach (e.g. someone who has worked in a similar setting will need a different sort of induction from someone newly qualified who has little experience).

Once completed, a review of each person’s induction should ensure that they understand all aspects covered.

If possible, a new employee should spend at least a couple of days shadowing an existing member of staff.

* Organise induction to be as efficient and as effective as possible.
* Ensure that the new recruit’s colleagues are informed of the new employee's induction and actual start date, so that they are ready to welcome them into the team.
* Ensure that people involved in the induction are informed of the agenda, their role and are prepared to deal with any questions the new employee may have.
* Ensure that all essential information is shared and allow the new staff member some time away from the children to absorb the new information.
* Decide on the appropriate format for conveying the information such as documents, videos, presentations, websites, booklets or people to meet and so on and ensure formats are accessible to every employee.
* Clarify priorities. Deal with the most important aspects first - don’t try to do everything at once.
* Provide time to reflect, question and clarify.
* Support and observe new staff members working with the children and their parents/guardians, working alongside existing staff, becoming part of the team.
* Ensure that existing staff members are clear about their roles with regard to the new employee and have clear expectations.
* Decide on whether to nominate a specific colleague from the team to act as a ‘buddy’ or mentor and deal with any questions that the new employee may need to ask outside the formal induction programme. (Remember that the buddy/mentor may need some additional help to manage this role in terms of understanding the scope of their responsibilities.)

***Appendix C***

*Sample* **training/STUDY LEAVE application FORM**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Course Details:**

Course title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address of training venue

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Training provider details

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Training date(s)

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**Period of study leave requested:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hours | ½ days | Days | Weeks |
|  |  |  |  |

Accommodation € \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Course Fees € \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Travel € \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Subsistence € \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of**

**Applicant**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Date**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of**

**Manager** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Date**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Please complete this section with your manager**

(It should relate to your Personal Development Plan)

What are the key areas of knowledge and skills that you want to learn from this course?

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What do you want to be able to do differently as a result of this course?

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How will the service benefit from this course?

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Form should be returned to *Management/ Management Committee*

***Appendix D***

**SAMPLE Induction checklist for new staff team members**

This checklist suggests elements which may be included on an induction programme covering care and education provision, safety, governance, premises and facilities, terms and conditions (including support and supervision and training). Once desired learning outcomes have been assessed by the manager as having been achieved, individual areas can be signed off.

**Introductions**

* Colleagues, children, parents/guardians, management committee members

**Care and Education Provision (including Health, Welfare and Development of the Child)**

* Specific needs of the children in the service
* Curriculum
* Interactions Policy and procedures
* Relationships and Interactions with parents/guardians
* Policy and procedures on Managing Behaviour
* Outings Policy and procedures
* Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Regulations) 2016
* Child Protection Policy and procedures
* Duty of care awareness
* Staff ratios
* Inclusion Policy and procedures
* Policy on Healthy Eating - Food and nutrition
* Key Person policy
* Settling-In policy
* Approach to quality management and standards
* Policy on Outdoor Play
* Policy on the Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices

**Safety**

* Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children
* Daily Arriving and Leaving policy and procedures
* Supervision of children
* Health and Safety policy and documentation
* Risk Assessment and Safety Statement
* Food hygiene
* Policy and procedures on Administration of Medications
* Accident, Incident and Injuries policy and procedures
* Infection Control policy and procedures
* First Aid contacts and facilities
* Lifting and handling
* Fire Safety Policy and procedures
* Emergency exits and collection points
* Nappy Changing/Toileting procedures
* Policy and procedures on Safe Sleep
* Confidentiality policy
* Staff ratios

**Governance**

* Statement of purpose and function including mission, ethos and values
* Organisation structure including reporting lines
* Complaints policy and procedures
* Policy on Staff Absences
* Policy on Overnight services. (where applicable)
* Telephone system and mobile phone use
* Photocopier and office equipment use
* Stationery/equipment/materials ordering procedures
* IT use and security (including internet and email use)
* Site security pass/access codes and procedures
* Receiving visitors protocol
* Meeting room booking procedures
* Hospitality/catering arrangements
* Records and record keeping
* Objectives/service plans

**Premises and Facilities**

* Site map and tour
* Car parking
* Maintenance and cleaning
* Equipment and materials
* Locking up

**Terms and Conditions**

* Hours of work
* Time off in lieu (TOIL)
* Breaks
* Payment of wages
* Sickness/absence policy and procedures
* Working Time policy
* Work/life Balance policy
* Equal Opportunities
* Complaints and grievance procedures
* Holidays, statutory and other leave
* Probation policies
* Bullying and Harassment policies
* Discipline and Grievance procedures
* Staff Support and Supervision
* Salary and payment arrangements (frequency and method)
* Tax/PRSI/Pension
* Benefits
* Financial management procedures
* Expenses
* Staff Training and Development plans, policy and procedures
* Staff Appraisal
* Mentoring Programme

**Necessary Documentation for Files**

* Signed contract
* Staff Handbook and Signed Declaration
* Information Profile
* Two written validated references
* Provide job description

***Appendix E***

**SAMPLE INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR NEW MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

* A brief history/overview of the service
* A copy of the Constitution/Memorandum and Articles of Association
* An introduction to the Curriculum/Programme
* Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee
* Names, qualifications and job descriptions of all staff members
* The Annual Report and accounts for previous three years
* The management and staff structure
* The legislative requirements and guidance documentation applicable to the service, including:
  + [Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2013/act/40/section/92/enacted/en/html).
  + The [Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/632/made/en/print).
  + Child welfare and protection legislation and national policies, including [Children First Act](http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2015/a3615.pdf) (2015) and [Our Duty to Care](https://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_Full_Eng.pdf) (2002).
* The service Policies, Procedures and Statements.