**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre**

**Statement of Purpose and Function**

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre is a registered setting providing quality, affordable early education and afterschool services for children aged 12 months to 15 years serving the Blennerville/Tralee Community: ECCE Sessional and Full-Time Childcare Service; Afterschool for School-Age Children; Full-Time Childcare for School-Age Children outside of ECCE/School Term. It is open 8.15am to 5.30pm, 50 weeks of the year, and only closes for Christmas holidays. We can cater for 16 children in the baby room with due consideration of their age, 33 ECCE children or 36 school age children in the room at any one time.

At The Willow Tree Children’s Centre, we are committed to providing a childcare service of the highest standard which provides the perfect environment for all children to develop their social, personal and education skills. We provide a loving home-from-home environment where each child is treated with respect and valued as individuals who will develop confidence in their knowledge, opinions and abilities. Our play-based curriculum addresses children’s well-being, identity and belonging, communication, exploring and thinking which follows Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework of Ireland and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. It is a broad-based, flexible, well-documented programme which emphasises hands-on activities, mental well-being and connection to nature.

Our team members are a hardworking, committed, highly qualified, professional team. Above all, the welfare, mental and emotional well-being of each child is of utmost importance to them. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with them. We would ask to remember that they are normally very busy at the beginning and during the day, but they will be happy to make time to talk to you at the end of the day or at a time convenient to both you and them.

The Willow Tree Children’s Centre is currently based in Clogher Fáilí, Tralee with access to a large outdoor area.

**Our Ethos**

We aim to actively promote the holistic development and welfare of children attending our service by providing a safe, secure and developmentally appropriate environment at the most reasonable rate that this facility can offer.

**Objectives**

• To nurture the children's curious dispositions and creative skills through play-based, child-led, open-ended activities, thereby enabling them to become competent, confident learners. Our afterschools programme provides the children with safe, challenging and fun environments that provide opportunities for children to engage in supervised recreational activities. We offer homework support, but our emphasis is on play, recreation and relaxation. Every child is enabled to participate in, enjoy and benefit from a wide range of cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities, and to engage in activities that are freely chosen and independent of schoolwork.

• To encourage and develop children’s creativity, to respect other’s points of view and develop openness to new knowledge and active learning.

• To continue to develop, review and pursue excellent working practices.

• To promote recognition and respect for children’s cultural, social, ethnic, and religious beliefs, their physical and cognitive development and to promote equality.

• We aim to make The Willow Tree Children’s Centre accessible to all members of the community, regardless of race, gender, family status, age, disability, or religious belief.

• To encourage children to fully participate in consideration of their individual developmental ability, to aid children develop self-discipline and self-regulation, to look at personal goals and complete their chosen tasks.

• The environment is planned and well-organised in a way that suits the different needs of individual children, while keeping in mind the importance of Health, Safety and Hygiene.

• We aim to deliver a quality care and play based curriculum which addresses children’s well-being, identity and belonging, communication and exploring and thinking, which follows Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework of Ireland and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

• We operate within the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services)(Amendments) Regulations 2016 and The National Standards for Pre-Schools (2010)

• We follow the Children First Act: National Guidance on the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.Our full Child Protection & Welfare Policy Statement is available on our website: www.blennervilleplayschool.com

• Parents are actively welcome at The Willow Tree Children’s Centre at all times. We endeavour to share information and communicate with parents directly, in order to give feedback at the end of each day and to ensure that they are made aware of on-going developments in policies and procedures. We also post curriculum updates and notifications on Facebook and WhatsApp in line with our confidentiality policy and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

• To provide the highest quality service where staff are encouraged and supported to access training, update their knowledge and skills and keep up with best practice in childcare development and education both at national and international level. The team works co-operatively and collaboratively which filters down to the children, alongside the promotion of helpful behaviour which is fostered in a positive culture of mutual respect, co-operation and collaboration which enables the child's confidence and self-esteem.

• The statement is available to parents, staff & relevant stakeholders in our handbook and on our website www.blennervilleplayschool.com

• Information on our school age programme and preschool curriculum is available in child friendly format to children availing of the service through the use of visual schedules and choice boards.

• This statement will be reviewed every two years or if there is a change in circumstances.

• List of the policies, procedures and statements which inform practice within the service:

Fire Safety Policy ; Policy on Staff Absences

Recruitment Policy; Settling-in Policy

Staff Training Policy; Staff Supervision Policy

Parents Handbook; Statement of Purpose and Function

Settling In Policy; Staff policy

Positive Behaviour Management; Child Safeguarding Statement;

Anti-bullying; Child protection

Healthy Eating Policy; Collection and Drop Off Policy

Safe Sleep Policy; Toileting and Nappy Changing Policy

Curriculum For Playschool; Complaints Policy and Form

Data-Protection; Use of Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy

Outdoor Play Policy; Outings

Fundraising; Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy

Administration of Medication; Illness prevention and infections control

Infectious Disease Exclusion Doc; Safety Statement

Risk Management Policy; Accident-incident-form

Accident and Incidents Policy and Procedures

**Number of children and staff**

**Description of Session Number of Children Adult Child Ratio**

2.5-5 years ECCE Session 9am-12pm 33 4:33

2.5-5 years Playschool Part-Time 12-1.30pm 16 2:16

School Aged Children 36 3:36

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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**Registered Proprietor:** Jessica Hastings

**Person in Charge:** Laura MacKenna

**Deputy Person in Charge**: Lisa Clifton