**The Willow Tree Children’s Centre**

**Positive Behaviour Management Policy for School Age Children**

At the Willow Tree, 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. We recognise that all children are individual with unique needs and abilities; therefore we endeavour to manage behaviour through a positive, supportive model. Our play-based, child-led curriculum encourages our school-age children to develop the skills of self-regulation (regulating their emotions according to the situational demands), problem-solving, conflict resolution and decision-making skills in an age-appropriate fashion.

All staff will support the children according to their individual needs and adjust the supports as required. Staff will implement clear and consistent expectations for all children. Staff will follow clear strategies to support children as detailed in this policy. The Willow Tree children’s centre will work collaboratively with parents/guardians as regards implementation also. Through this partnership, we place each child’s emotional well-being, and individual needs and rights at the centre of our practice.

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 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

This Positive Behaviour Management Policy details:

• The standards of behaviour which will be observed by each child attending our service;

• A comprehensive list of strategies for promoting positive behaviour;

• The supportive and disciplinary measures which will be taken if a child fails to follow the standards of behaviour;

• The procedures to be followed in relation to repeated absences or inconsistencies with pre-booked hours of care, which breaches subsidy rules.

This policy takes into consideration our Curriculum, Safeguarding Statement, Safety Statement, Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, the contract of behaviour which the children develop themselves each September and most importantly the children’s own views, opinions and ideas (with due weight given in accordance with the age and maturity of the child). The policy has been reviewed and updated to take into account their contributions as well as our shared learning as a team of staff over the years.

**Aims of the Policy**

• To retain an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and understanding where positive interactions are encouraged. We aim to enhance intrinsic motivation and praise each child’s pro-social, helpful behaviours.

• To allow the service to function in an orderly manner where children can learn and develop to their full potential, develop a love of learning and confidence in their knowledge, opinions and abilities.

• To promote positive behaviour and respectful interactions in consideration of all children’s varying needs and abilities and the different levels of support which may be necessary to manage situations and accommodate these differences.

• To ensure the health, safety (physical and psychological) and overall well being of children, staff, families and the wider community.

• To provide clarity on the expected behaviours and procedures associated with the policy of behaviour and to seek co-operation with application of procedures.

• To ensure that these procedures, age appropriate expectations of behaviour, rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

**Standards of Behaviour**

* ***Children***

At The Willow Tree children’s centre, we encourage co-operation and collaboration which we role model by working this way as a team. This 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.

We expect all school-age children:

• To be **polite, friendly, respectful and helpful** to others, children and staff.

• To **play fairly, safely** and include others in their activities. They should avoid play which is too rough or dangerous and in terms of rough and tumble play, respect when their playmate has had enough.

• **Respect one another**, accepting differences of race, gender, ability, age and religion.

• Use socially acceptable behaviour. All children are expected to treat staff and fellow peers with respect, courtesy and inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated eg. bad language, fighting, name-calling, pushing, kicking or spitting. The **property** belonging to others and to the setting should be **respected** and this will consistently be encouraged by staff.

• **Comply with the children’s contract of behaviour** which is developed by themselves with rules they consider as important in helping them take ownership of their behaviour.

• Ask for help if needed. Children are consistently reminded that if an issue arises between peers, we encourage all school-age children to speak to a staff member to develop solutions to resolve the issue, if they cannot do so themselves.

We implement a staged process to **conflict** 1. Tell the other child either to ‘stop I don’t like it’ or explain their needs. 2. Approach an adult for help. 3. The adult may use the Zones of Regulation self-regulation programme to identify and discuss their emotions and how they impacted each other. 4. The children may complete ‘My behaviour Story’ (see attached) which can be tailored to the age or developmental ability of the children involved. This staged process is **displayed visually** in a prominent place in the classroom.

• **Attend on a regular basis and be punctual** regarding pre-booked hours of care. Due to our stringent staff-child ratios and high demand for childcare, we need to be very organised in our approach, so **the days and times previously arranged that your child will be attending** will remain until you provide us with **written notice** of the change. This is also very important for abiding by the rules of **The National Childcare Subsidy.** Reasons for absence should be uploaded to Child Paths. If a child needs to leave early or if they will be absent, we need this in writing via email or whatsapp.If a child is to be collected by someone different to the norm, we also need this in writing.

• Bring **healthy lunches** to school in line with our Healthy Eating Policy and not have sugary foods in advance of attending the setting as it can seriously impact a childs behaviour and ability to regulate themselves. **Important to note:** We are a **nut free setting** as we have a severe allergy to nuts. We also no longer accept cake or extra treats for birthdays unfortunately. A wooden cake with birthday candles is used and we provide healthy/non-sugary treats and have a party to celebrate each child’s birthday.

• L**isten** to and follow their teachers direction and guidance. They should also listen to other children when they are speaking.

• **Remain within the premises** at all times and when on an outing, remain within the assigned boundaries of the playspace. Regarding outings, children are expected to behave positively, politely and follow instruction for their own safety. They are also expected to represent the setting in a respectful and appropriate manner.

• Walk within the classrooms, and are constantly reminded to **walk,** as running will not be tolerated and has been proven to be a serious health and safety risk.

• Never bully or belittle others, speak to each other with courtesy and respect.

**Personal devices** will not be used by children under any circumstances for school based activities. School owned devices (cameras, tablets, laptops etc) will be the only devices used during school hours or school related activities to give best assurances of pupil and staff safety. This does not apply to devices that are granted under assistive technology or are used for medical reasons. Where a device is needed for medical reasons permission must be sought from Management. They may request further details from a medical professional. **Children are not permitted to have smart watches/technology on their person or in their possession.** A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages photographs and/or video content. A simple wrist watch or fitness trackers (that do not include any of the above technologies) are allowed. **Mobile phones are not allowed by children in the setting.** If children need to contact their parents, the school phone may be used. If children are found in possession of a phone, it will be taken from them and stored in the office. These will then have to be collected by parents from the school.

**Child Leaving the Service Unaccompanied:**

During the hours that they are in The Willow Tree children’s centre, children must not leave unaccompanied. They must be signed out by a member of staff unless prior arrangement and written permission has been obtained. If a child leaves unauthorised and unaccompanied the following procedure will apply:

• Children will never be left unsupervised – a staff member will follow the child if necessary

• The child’s parent/guardian will be contacted

• The best interests of the child and their safety are the priority of The Willow Tree children’s centre at all times leaving the premises unauthorised is considered a serious behaviour issue.

* ***Staff***

It is the responsibility of management to ensure that the policy of behaviour is adhered to and administered in a fair and consistent manner. It is the **responsibility of all staff** to maintain the policy of behaviour also.

• Staff **model positive behaviour** through how they speak and interact with the children.

• The Willow Tree children’s centre has a Code of Conduct for staff in the staff handbook.

• Staff should develop a **contract of behaviour** with the children in September, in consideration of and through the discussion of the expected behaviours from this policy in an age appropriate manner. Each child has a right to be heard and to have his/her opinions and views respected and it is their teachers role to facilitate opportunities for consultation, decision making and participation. The children’s contract should be displayed in the classroom.

• Staff must always ensure there is an appropriate level of **supervision** at all times.

• Staff acknowledge that intrinsic motivation is the ideal. They should also reward the children with lots of praise, motivation and sometimes prizes for particular helpful behaviours. This helps the children develop a sense of self-efficacy, pride in their abilities and pro-social behaviours. However, extrinsic motivation should not be over-used or relied upon.

• Staff are required to keep a **written record of repeated incidences of misbehaviours**, and/or serious or gross misconduct. This record should indicate the antecedent, behaviour and consequences and be reported to management. Misbehaviours should be managed by staff as far as is practicable in line with the supportive interventions and disciplinary actions detailed in this policy.

• Staff show **empathy** to the feelings which the child may be experiencing.

• Staff always comfort an upset child and help them **develop tools to regulate** themselves whilst encouraging accountability and positive behaviour.

• Staff should help children to **resolve conflict** if applicable. Follow the staged process on display in the classroom.

• A child’s behaviour is not discussed amongst the staff team or others outside The Willow Tree children’s Centre. Only relevant staff will be informed of information including action plans, or care plans on a **need to know basis.**

• All staff receive **training** on this policy at induction and when necessary after that.

• Staff need to be aware and constantly **reflect on their expectations** that they are consistent for all children and are dependent on the age, stage of development, ability and needs of the child.

• Children’s **efforts, achievements and feelings will be acknowledged** by sincere encouragement, leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.

• A **range of activities** will be available to the group of children, which offer a lot of choice to all, in order to support children’s play ideas. This is further explored in the strategies section below.

• The Willow Tree children’s centre encourages **independence and autonomy** for each child.

**Prohibited Practices**

• Corporal punishment - Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.

• Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, shaming, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending the service.

• Bullying of any form

• Restraint of children by unapproved methods

* ***Parents***

Positive behaviour management strategies work best when there is consistency of care across all contexts in a child's life which involves clear **communication and collaboration** between the child's parents, families and early childhood educators.

• Parents and families play a vital role in shaping their children’s attitudes and behaviour. They can assist the setting by encouraging children to **abide by the setting’s rules and listen to their practitioners directions** to keep themselves and their peers safe and happy.

• Requests of specific strategies from parents will only be implemented where it follows the services positive behaviour management policy and is line with best practice.

• Staff implement a balanced approach to communication with parents.

• Staff are aware of **respectful communication** in supporting all children in managing their behaviour. Where staff need to speak with a parent/guardian **they should ask the child whether they want to be present for this discussion, with due consideration to their age and developmental level**, we do not want them to feel ashamed but only to demonstrate clear communication and that we are there to help them keep themselves and all the other children safe and happy.

• The parent/guardian is informed of incidents of behaviour in a mindful manner e.g. away from the door, not calling the parent into the room in front of other parents, away from other children.

• Parents can r**equest a meeting** with the service to discuss specific elements of the behaviour management policy. The Willow Tree children’s centre, at the earliest convenience will facilitate this.

• The Willow Tree children’s centre maintains clear procedures on **monitoring and recording** any incidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.

• Information is only shared with parent/ guardians regarding strategies or plans in place to support their child.

• Parents are encouraged to discuss any concern and give their input and advice regarding behaviours, issues, or grievances that are managed within The Willow Tree children’s centre.

• Where an accident and/or incident has been recorded under the managing behaviour policy,

details are recorded on two separate records for each parent to sign. Records only disclose the

name of the individual child of the parent which is signing. The second child’s name is not disclosed.

Parents will:

• Be treated with **respect;**

• Have a **safe and welcoming environment** for their child;

• Obtain **recognition for individual differences** among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available;

• Have **fair and consistent procedures** applied to their children within the setting;

• **Receive information** on setting’s policies and procedures.

• Ensure that they **adhere to the policy of behaviour** above and that they encourage their children to follow the policy

**Communication with Primary school**

• The Willow Tree children’s centre does not have permission to discuss any child’s behaviour with a primary school without the parent/ guardian’s permission.

• In certain cases, where The Willow Tree children’s centre is contacted by the school to contribute to an individual care plan parent/guardian consent is sought prior to any information being shared.

• The Willow Tree children’s centre may request to discuss a child’s behaviour with the school to ensure consistent strategies are being implemented. Parent/guardian consent will be sought prior to any discussion.

**Health and Safety**

● Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked that teachers be made aware of any special needs or

medical needs which a child may have and if any new conditions arise that they inform us in writing to update our files.

● Medical notices are clearly displayed in each classroom where applicable. More serious

medical issue notices are on display in the staffroom.

● Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to please check your child’s hair regularly for outbreaks

of head lice and treat if necessary.

● Children who are ill should not be in school. Refer to our illness prevention and infectious disease control policy and minimum periods of exclusion.

● Parking directly outside the setting is strictly prohibited. Please use the designated parking and adhere to the one way system through the estate for the safety of all.

**Strategies for encouraging Positive Behaviour**

The Willow Tree children’s centre encourages positive behaviour through -

• Providing a **balance of adult led and child led activities. NEW for 2024: The room leader will develop an emergent curriculum based on the needs and interests of the children. The children will be at the centre of this, ensuring that they are enabled to exercise choice, have a voice in decisions that affect them and are considered active participants in their own development and learning. This loosely structured curriculum recognises the importance of play, offers children free time and fun activities which help them to be creative, develop imagination and abstract thinking, develop or enhance leadership and social skills, self-esteem, interests and hobbies, conflict resolution skills and academic achievements.** Flexible routines are developed to meet the needs of the children.

• Offering a **variety of opportunities** to meet the needs of the children attending the service. • The children do not sit for long periods of time. The staff at the Willow Tree children’s centre encourage choice to move from an activity which does not interest them. They are also encouraged to move so we provide lots of opportunities for this e.g. creative dance, Go Noodle, Discos in the classroom, Children’s yoga and Structured and unstructured Physical Activity outside.

• Each child is assigned a **“key person”.** This is important for gathering information and knowledge about the whole child. Through their role, key workers can anticipate a child’s reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child’s mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance.

• The Willow Tree children’s centre follows different strategies based on the type, frequency and impact of the behaviour(s) – these strategies are **visually displayed** in a prominent place in the classroom for children and staff.

• The **environments** are laid out into specific spaces with sufficient space, equipment and materials to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the children. Equipment and materials are carefully chosen to offer a variety of challenging and stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. Children are consulted about the environment and are involved in the review, evaluation and purchasing of equipment.

• As mentioned, the **children’s contract of behaviour** is important in helping them take ownership of their behaviour. This is completed with their teachers in September and regularly reviewed.

• Strategies such as **reward charts** are implemented to help children achieve certain skills such as toileting and inclusively at a whole group level. These are to be used in a positive way eg. Children climb the reward scale or receive rewards once they achieve certain goals. Child never receive sanctions in relation to this system eg. moving backwards down the reward scale. We acknowledge that intrinsic motivation is the ideal and give lots of praise. Rewards for extrinsic motivation should not be over-used or relied upon.

• We are committed to and responsible for continually reviewing and evaluating **quality improvement** processes. Each term, all staff document self-assessments and critically reflect on all aspects of service provision and practice. We invite our children, parents and families to contribute to the evaluation and review of the service and the programme of activities on offer. We also engage in an Annual Review service annually with the Board of Management.

**Inappropriate Behaviour**

This policy classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. These levels also specify the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions which will be employed.

**1. Level One Behaviours**

Level one behaviours may be a once off incident or it may be specific times where a child needs support based on their age, stage of development or needs. These behaviours are those which interfere with the orderly operation of the setting. Children will learn from their mistakes and will be taught and reflect upon what is expected and how they should behave.

Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

● Failure to listen to teachers requests such as ‘No running in the classroom’

● Disturbing the work or play of others

● Disrespectful language, bad language such as swearing, tone, or manner

**Level One: Supportive Interventions**

The Willow Tree children’s centre supports the development of self-regulation through the Zones of Regulation Programme, conflict resolution and the Whole Brain Child Strategies.

These strategies support the child to develop the skill of regulating emotions and problem-solving. There may be different levels of support which are needed for each individual child; the adult should adjust support where necessary in this process for each individual child.

Below are the steps to follow in using the **Conflict Resolution Approach**

• Approach calmly – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and

real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child’s eye level.

• Acknowledge feelings – describe how the child/ children are feeling.

• Gather information – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of

the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and

remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.

• Restate the problem – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so

both/all can understand different sides of the story.

• Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together - give the children an opportunity to come

up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit

of time. The policy of behaviour is referred to throughout this conversation. Isolating,

undermining, labelling or disregarding practices are not used. Children are encouraged to be

respectful and show empathy.

• Be prepared to give follow up support – it is important the staff member follows through on

the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in

the approach.

Communication with parents

• These behaviours may or may not immediately be shared with parents as it may be linked to

the age of the child or stage of development. It is the role of the adult to support the child in

developing these problem-solving skills.

**Level One: Disciplinary Actions**

Consequences are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

● Verbal reprimand/reminder(s) (making clear what behaviour was unacceptable)

● Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour (strategies)

● Temporary separation from peers, friends or others to facilitate reflection and self-regulation or if it becomes a threat to the health and safety of the child or other children. Never to be used in a shaming or negative way.

● Loss of privileges (at the discretion of the teacher – food or involvement in the curriculum never to be used) It is reasonable to not reward a child when they have misbehaved but exclusion is not permitted.

● Encouraging a child to engage in sensory rich activities to aid self-regulation such as theraputty, kinetic sand or colouring.

● Management can be called/ involved

● Parent contact where applicable

**2. Level Two Moderate Behaviour Issues**

This type of behaviour can be recognised as one which seriously interferes with the order of the setting, can be potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of others and/or when a behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence.

Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level Two. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

● Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention

● Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. deliberate hitting / punching)

● Intentionally damaging school or personal property

● Stealing

● Use of profanity or derogatory reference to either another person’s race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation

● Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult or another child

● Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any

kind of knives, etc.)

● Leaving the premises unaccompanied

● Cyber bullying

Incidents of reoccurring behaviour are documented by The Willow Tree children’s centre. The type of information which is recorded may include location, time, date, triggers (antecedents), behaviour, consequences and witnesses. These are stored securely and are highly confidential.

**Level Two: Supportive Interventions**

Listed below are some examples of Level Two supportive actions:

• The key worker may speak with the child to discuss the behaviour e.g. why they think it might be happening, what the adults can do to support the child. This is an informal conversation in a quiet space away from the child’s peers. At this point, they may complete ‘My behaviour story’ either on their own or if necessary, with another child involved.

• The parents are then contacted by management and the child is informed of this. In so far as practical, the child may be involved in the development of an individual care plan between their key worker and the parent/guardian. This involvement may be directly or indirectly.

• Ideas and solutions are encouraged from the child, and the staff, in so far as practical, will implement them once it is in best practice guidelines.

• Staff may observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour using an Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) Chart. This may be the keyworker, and/or another staff member. The plan will identify the duration of observations e.g. for one week, two weeks.

• Where observations are carried out, the child should not feel isolated. It is important at this

stage, that staff involved are clear on the purpose of the observations and behaviours being

observed.

• In respecting the dignity and rights of the child, where observations are carried out,

information should be shared with relevant staff.

• The well-being of the children and staff is paramount, and The Willow Tree children’s centre may put varied supports in place where needed.

• Following the observations, staff are supported to reflect on trends and/or triggers for the

behaviour. Additional strategies may be suggested at this stage e.g. staggered transitions,

one-to-one support at mealtimes, visual routine, increasing adult: child ratio, physical layout

is arranged so that there is a high level of visibility.

• The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place. The plan will

have a start and end date for review.

Communication with Parents

Reassurance should be provided to parents on supporting their child and open communication should be encouraged throughout this process. The staff team may carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an individual care plan to support the child. In setting up a meeting to with parent/guardian, The Willow Tree children’s centre should consider the following:

- Where possible, a suitable time/day is prearranged with the parent and service e.g. after

the session, collection time or during the day.

- Possible supports the parent/guardian might need for the meeting e.g. family member

- Meetings are in a comfortable uninterrupted space.

- All conversations are away from the child or if the child wants to be present, they can with due regard to their age and developmental level of ability and understanding.

- Consistent staff attend the meeting e.g. key worker or room leader and manager

- All meetings plans and information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.

- A plan will be developed between the staff and parent/guardian to support the child. This

plan will be short-term of 1-2 weeks approx. The strategies and timeframe of the plan

will be clear.

- Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.

- Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting is decided.

- Observations may be carried out at different times of the day to try establishing triggers of the behaviour. All observations will be discussed with the parent/ guardian.

- During the meeting, the plan, trends and/or noticeable triggers may be discussed with the

parent/ guardian. \*This process may be cyclical and reoccur many times to identify a trigger or the appropriate strategy.

- Where the service has decided to continue observing the child, a further plan may be put

into place in collaboration with the parent/ guardians.

• If the behaviour is a child protection concern, the Child safeguarding Policy will be implemented.

• The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in

situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.

• When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing

difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek

professional advice, such as a psychologist or play therapist. The parent/guardian may then

seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.

• If parents/guardians fail to attend such meetings, a formal/written request should be made.

**Management reserve the right to terminate a child’s place in the event that parents/guardians are not engaging with and supportive of the policies of the service.**

**Level Two: Disciplinary Actions**

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by Management.

Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

● Formal contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) by Management

● Report may be submitted to the Board of Management

● Reduced hours of attendance – sometimes the length of the day can be quite tiring and lead to disruptive behaviour

● Whilst every effort will be made to ensure the most positive outcome for the child, management reserve the right to terminate a child’s place based on the best interests of the child and the health and safety of all service users.

**3. Level Three Serious Behaviour Issues**

These are the most serious violations which endanger the immediate health, safety and wellbeing of others. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the setting. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána/ Tusla, after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

• Repeated, serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention

• Setting fires

• Intentional possession or use of weapons

• Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others

• Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, ethnic origin or sexual orientation

• Cyber Bullying

• Behaviours that are not responsive to supportive interventions

• Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour

**Level Three Supportive Interventions**

Specific strategies may be followed to support the child including Conflict Resolution Approach or the Whole Brain Child Strategies. If appropriate, The Willow Tree children’s centre may develop an individual care plan to support the child. Where other strategies are in place to support the child, there is a clear outline provided in the care plan. These strategies follow best practice guidelines.

Services may also use the following to support serious behaviour issues:

• Time to one side with support of an adult

In rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult,

for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. Adult support is needed throughout

this time, and a child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support. This may involve removing the child or other children from the room. This is in order to protect everyone using the service not as a form of timeout and/or isolating a child. The staff member will record the incident and discuss with the family.

• Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm

The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to

an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property. Regardless of age, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time.

If staff physically intervene to prevent injury to a child or others, staff must ensure no pain is inflicted upon children, an incident report is completed, that Parent/Guardians are informed of the staff intervening, an approved evidence-based method is used and all staff have been fully trained on the method of intervention.

• Contact should be made with parent if serious behaviour issues persist.

• In some cases, an individual care plan is developed from external agencies who are supporting the child. The Willow Tree children’s centre and Afterschool, in so far as practical, will implement this care plan in collaboration with parents/guardians.

**Level 3 Disciplinary Actions**

In certain circumstances of more serious behaviour issues, further sanctions may be required. These must be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child and take account of the cultural background of the child. Sanctions should be sensitive to the particular circumstances of vulnerable individuals or groups of children. They should also be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour. The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

• helping children to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable

• helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others

• helping children (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences

• helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

• reinforce the boundaries set out in the policy of behaviour

• signal to other children and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

• prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning

• keep the child, or other children or adults, safe.

Management reserve the right to request reduced hours of attendance – sometimes the length of the day can be quite tiring for a child and lead to disruptive behaviour. Risk assessments are routinely undertaken and if there is no improvement in a child’s behaviour, management reserve the right to terminate a child’s place based on the best interests of the child and the health and safety of all service users.

**Staff Training and Development:**

• All behaviour management strategies implemented by staff in The Willow Tree children’s centre are in keeping with the ethos and the mission of the service.

• Staff are fully trained and where appropriate, certified in all behaviour management strategies

used in The Willow Tree children’s centre.

• Staff will engage with Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure their knowledge and understanding is up to date.

**Repeated absences or inconsistencies with registered hours**

• It is in the best interest of children to **attend on a regular basis and be punctual** regarding pre-booked hours of care. Due to our stringent staff-child ratios and high demand for childcare, we need to be very organised in our approach, so **the days and times previously arranged that your child will be attending** will remain until you provide us with **written notice** of the change. This is also very important for abiding by the rules of **The National Childcare Subsidy (NCS).**

• **When a child accepts their place and registers their hours, this is only guaranteed for the 38 weeks of term time. It does not guarantee their place during non-term time (school holidays). Advance booking is essential due to limited space requirements.**

• **Reasons for absence** should be uploaded to Child Paths. If a child needs to leave early or if they will be absent, we need this in writing via email or whatsapp.

• Fees must be paid even when a child is absent due to illness, except in special circumstances and with the agreement of management.

• If a child will not be attending, we require **one weeks written notice** or you will be charged in full. Last minute cancellations will be charged in full. **Four weeks non-attendance could result in the termination of a child’s place unless this period is approved by management in writing.**

• If **fees are not paid** for four consecutive weeks, a written notice will be sent out to parent/ guardian. After five weeks of non-payment we reserve the right to terminate a child’s place. The Willow Tree will refuse admission to any child or sibling whose family have a historical outstanding bill.

• As laid out by the NCS subsidy rules, we are legally required to report any absence for a continuous period of four or more consecutive weeks. The scheme administrator will then automatically issue a warning notification to both parent and provider to say that the subsidy for the child will be suspended if the absence continues. If the child has already returned to the service when this warning is issued (in the fifth week) it may be ignored as there will be no break in subsidy if the absence lasts no longer than four weeks. If the child does not return in the fifth week, the subsidy will not be payable for any period between the four weeks absence “allowance period” and the date of return. Unless in the case of special circumstances which need to be applied for and deemed to apply, they may approve payment of the subsidy for a six week continuous absence period.

• We are also required to report any persistent under-attendance for eight or more consecutive weeks. The scheme administrator will issue a notification to both the parent and the provider indicating that financial support will be reduced if a pattern of reduced hours continues for a further four weeks and will indicate the date from which this change will take effect (which will be no sooner than twenty working days after the date of the notification). The notification will ask the provider to establish with the parent whether this pattern of reduced hours will continue, in which case the child’s registered hours must be adjusted on the Provider Portal.

• If a parent will be **late**, they are required to telephone the service. When a parent is late and does not telephone the service, a further fee will be charged after fifteen minutes. If a child is not collected by a parent thirty minutes after the agreed time, the service will contact the emergency contact persons.

• If a child is repeatedly late or collected repeatedly late, management will speak to the parent. If it continues, further fees will be charged and your child’s place could be put on hold.

• If a child is to be collected by someone different to the norm, we also need this in writing.

• If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day and the service is unable to contact the parent and the emergency contacts, the following procedures apply: The child will stay at the service in the care of two fully vetted staff members until the premises close and staff are no longer available to care for the child. Staff will follow procedures as outlined in the Child Safeguarding policy and contact the HSE Child Protection and Social Work Services on 0719123770 or the local Garda station. A full report of the incident is recorded.

**Bullying**

The Willow Tree children’s centre is committed to be a safe and friendly place for all children. We expect all children and staff to be treated with respect and kindness at all times. Bullying behaviours can be defined as physical and direct behaviours, such as slagging, intimidation and aggression, or more subtle and relational interactions such as exclusion, talking negatively about a child to others, or the silent treatment. It is typically a repeated phenomenon. Bullying is not tolerated, and we have specific steps we follow in the event of bullying. The Willow Tree children’s centre seeks to identify, responding and manage bullying in a timely and sensitive manner.

Bullying can include different types of actions:

• Verbal actions

• Gestures or signs

• Physical actions

• Taking or breaking other people’s belongings

• Leaving people out of games or any other type of exclusion

• Cyberbullying

This is not an exhaustive list and there are other things that could happen that are considered bullying. All incidents of bullying witnessed should be reported to management as soon as possible. The manager will investigate any bullying allegations. This might involve speaking to the children involved, gathering information on who is involved and in the case of cyberbullying recording any posts online. All bullying investigations are handled sensitively. Parents are informed of any bullying investigation. On occasion, it may be necessary for The Willow Tree children’s centre to liaise with the child/children’s school. If a bullying issue is also ongoing at setting, The Willow Tree children’s centre and the school will communicate about the approach. Following identification of a bullying issue, The Willow Tree children’s centre will implement an intervention that is determined by the nature of the bullying and the children involved. All staff are fully trained on the appropriate interventions. Intervention might include:

• Negotiating agreements between pupils

• Working with parents and guardians

• Mediation

• Buddy/peer mentoring

Other strategies will be considered as necessary.

**Cyber bullying**

Cyber bullying can be defined as bullying above that occurs over the internet or via mobile phone. The Willow Tree children’s centre is committed to preventing cyberbullying in our service. The following guidelines are followed:

• The children in The Willow Tree children’s centre are not permitted to have a mobile phone switched on while on the premises and grounds.

• The computers/tablets in The Willow Tree children’s centre have blocked all social media website. This limits access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online. There is an internet usage poster of rules on the wall for children. When they use the computer, tablet or smart tv, staff will draw their attention to these rules.

• Parents are requested to update The Willow Tree children’s centre of any potential cyberbullying incidents they are aware of.

• Children are required to report any incident of cyber bullying to The Willow Tree children’s centre.

**Complaints Policy**

The services complaints policy and procedures should be followed where there any issues or concerns regarding the implementation of the managing behaviour policy.

**Communication of Policy**

All parents/guardians are to be informed of this policy. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read, understood and signed the policy and to provide any assistance if needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parent/Guardian Handbook and all parents have access to the full policy during hours of operation in the early years’ service and on our website www.blennervilleplayschool.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.

**Address:**  The Willow Tree Children’s Centre

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**: Danielle Berry

This policy was reviewed and adopted by The Willow Tree Children’s Centre on 20th August 2024. All children and staff were involved in the review, parents were asked for their feedback and contribution.

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

On behalf of Management

*I confirm, that I have read, I understand, accept and agree to abide by the terms and conditions as outlined in the above Positive Behaviour Management Policy* *of The Willow Tree Children’s Centre. I have explained these terms to my child in an age-appropriate fashion and I have ensured that they understand the behaviour expected of them. I understand and accept the consequences of not adhering to the terms and conditions.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardians Signature Date**

**Appendix A – The Willow Tree Children Centre’s Individual Care Plan**

**Child’s Name:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Name of Parent/Legal Guardian(s):**

**Emergency Contact Details:**

1. **Name: Telephone Number:**
2. **Name: Telephone Number:**
3. **Name: Telephone Number:**

**Medical diagnosis or condition:**

**Is the child receiving medical care from any outside agencies?**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **No** | **Contact name** | **Telephone number** |
| **Doctor/GP** |  |  |  |  |
| **Health Visitor** |  |  |  |  |
| **Physiotherapist** |  |  |  |  |
| **Speech and Language Therapist** |  |  |  |  |
| **Asthma Nurse** |  |  |  |  |
| **Other, please specify:** |  |  |  |  |

**Please give details of child’s medical/care needs (daily care requirements):**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Signs and symptoms to be aware of:**

**What constitutes an emergency for the child?**

**Agreed procedure to be followed:** (Details of the treatment to be given, when medication is to be given? (Medication must be in original package with child’s name and dosage stated clearly).Name of Medication, Type, Dosage, Storage, Who administer? See medication authorisation form. What is the usual reaction to medication? Can a second dose be given? If so when? Action required if condition continues). **OR Strategies required to meet the child’s additional need.** (Daily care requirements, special precautions e.g. evacuation procedures).

**Follow up care required for the child:**

**Training required of staff for care of child:**

**Have staff been trained by a qualified medical professional to administer treatment/procedures? Yes No**

**If no what is the action plan?**

**The information on this Care Plan has been agreed with:**

**Parent/Legal Guardian (Name): Signature: Date:**

**Provider (Name): Signature: Date:**

**Medical professional e.g. GP (Name): Signature: Date:**

**Planned review date of Individual Care Plan:**

**My Behaviour Story (School Aged Children)**

Reflecting on my actions

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ My Age: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This can be written, spoken about or drawn.

**What happened?**

**What did I do?**

**How do I feel? – maybe sad, embarrassed, alone, guilty, do not care, good, angry**

**What will I do to change my attitude / stop it from happening again?**

Date: ­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/ Guardian’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_