



Grovelands Childcare Policies & Procedures

Athlone ★ Tullamore ★ Mullingar

www.grovelandschildcare.ie

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Statement of Purpose and Function

Description of our Service reflecting the day-to-day operation

Regina Bushell and Grovelands Childcare have become nationally accredited and known for their high standards of Childcare and Education. From opening her original Playgroup in 1978, Regina was somewhat of a pioneer when she opened a full day care centre in Athlone in 1992 with just two children attending. Today Grovelands Childcare, with its multi award winning centres still under the personal guidance of Regina, operates a number of premier childcare facilities throughout the midlands supporting hundreds of families.

Regina has been described as “unique in her field of expertise” for the high standards she achieves in both her Grovelands Childcare centres and throughout her voluntary work and commitment at National level. Regina has won awards as managing director of Grovelands Childcare including Entrepreneur of the Year from Westmeath County Enterprise Board, Business Person of the Year from the Athlone Chamber as well as an Outstanding Contribution to Childcare award at the Maternity and Infant Awards.

Grovelands Childcare have achieved many awards for their centres including “The centres of Excellence Awards”, “Green Flag Award”, “Healthy Smart Start Award”, “The Maternity and Infants Award for “Best Multiple creche in Ireland” as well as “Best in Outdoors”, “Best in Food and Nutrition” and “Best Learning Environments”. Grovelands Childcare Corran Riada took part in the initial Siolta pilot program and at that time was awarded the highest possible level of quality.

Grovelands Childcare can contribute significantly to the social, physical, emotional and intellectual growth of your children. Our centres are designed to support the health, education, development and well-being of young children. Educational Equipment and toys are readily accessible and independence is encouraged throughout all age groups day-to-day.

Grovelands Childcare has a clear list of policies to ensure the safety of both the children and staff. These policies are written in line with the Túsla recommendations and other influencing bodies in the sector.

Aims, objectives, purpose, values, principals, ethos

Grovelands Childcare ethos is to ensure that your child develops all the early life skills in a creative and stimulating safe environment where interaction and self-expression are actively encouraged. Grovelands Childcare will ensure an inclusive culture and will recognise that every child is an individual and has their own learning style.

Our vision is twofold and looks at the here and now and also the future. Our here and now goal is that you the parents will feel good about your childcare choice and that your children are safe, engaged, stimulated, educated, healthy, having fun and smiling. For the future that your children will warmly look back at their experience with us and see it as a cherished part of their childhood.

Our indoor and outdoor Environments follow the principles of The Reggio-Emilia Approach allowing for this environment to become the third teacher. They are designed to offer a wide diverse range of play experiences to develop smells, senses, physical play, social play, dramatic/fantasy play, intellectual play, cognitive play, textural play and support inclusion. We believe that with the correct clothing children should be able to access the outdoors regardless of the weather.

Grovelands Childcare works off a play-based curriculum that is developed through the children's own achievements and emerging Interests in conjunction with Aistear and Síolta. Our centres also encourage the healthy development of relationships between children and their communities, helping children to interact, socialize and develop a sense of respect and care for their surroundings.

Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland; it was published towards the end of 2009. It provides information for staff to help them plan for, and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners, within loving relationships with others. Aistear describes the types of learning that are important for children in their early years, and offers ideas and suggestions as to how this learning may be nurtured.

Síolta is the national quality framework designed for use within all services working with children aged 0-6 years. It outlines standards of quality practice which services should aspire to. Síolta was devised by the former Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) and formally launched in 2006; it reflects and recognises Irish practice. Síolta is not designed to make all services the same, but rather to establish quality standards which can be achieved in many ways and through many types of curriculum.

Such commitment to standards of quality and excellence operates in all Grovelands Childcare facilities. Grovelands Childcare is registered and is a member of the Early Childhood Ireland, Montessori Alliance, National Childcare Network and Seas Suas. Grovelands Childcare will promote and nurture the identity of each child attending the service and ensure that their emotional and physical well-being is of paramount importance at all times.

Our Missions and Goals

At Grovelands Childcare we strive to give parents peace of mind, while being seen as a shining example of what a quality early education and care centre should be.

- We recognise the rights of the child
- We believe that each child is a unique individual
- We are sensitive to a child's social, emotional, intellectual, physical, creative and spiritual needs
- We believe in providing a quality, stimulating, educational early learning childcare and after school care experience for all children that is developmentally appropriate.
- We believe that the strength of our Curriculum & Activities is in the training, continued professional development, mentoring and dedication of our staff.
- We establish consistent, age appropriate limits to help children function in their world.
- We desire to strengthen each child's own cultural identity, while instilling a respect for others who might be different

- We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life
- We strive to create mutual respect between parents and staff: a partnership for the benefit of the child
- We are an equal opportunities employer and follow strict guidelines for the recruitment of our staff.
- We strive each day to be the best provider of early years educational and care services in the community we serve
- We achieve care and inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach that is implemented by the early childhood services and by working in partnership with families, children and the early childhood team, both individually through reflective practice and in consultation with children and their families, so as to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that attend and use our service.
- Through engaging with all Government subvention schemes we are ensuring that all children across the midlands can have access to quality early years and educational services.

Grovelands Childcare is an organisation that values people: the children in our care, their parents and our employees. We appreciate the supports from Government Agencies such as Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Education, Túsla, Better Start and AIM (Access and Inclusion Model). We continually work to earn the trust that is placed in us.

Who our Services are aimed at

All parents naturally want the best for their children and our team at Grovelands Childcare is widely acclaimed within the care and early education childcare profession as providing excellent service, afterschool care and early education in all of our centres.

We provide modern, fully equipped and purpose-built facilities that operates in a warm and loving environment. We recognise that our most valuable asset is our team of highly qualified and experienced professionals who create a loving, nurturing and friendly atmosphere in which your child can grow and develop.

Grovelands Childcare provides a range of different types of care. All of the services below are available to both private parents and those availing of any of the Government Subvention Schemes. For further information on schemes and eligibility criteria visit www.affordablechildcare.ie:

Full Day Care

Our full day care service refers to structured full day care up to 10hrs for children from babies up to age 13 years.

Sessional Care

Our sessional care refers to a morning or afternoon session that does not exceed over 3 hours per day. This includes the ECCE scheme.

After School Care

This type of service caters for children who are of school going age. It may include care before school begins, or in the afternoons when school finishes or both. The centre may also cater for children during school holidays.

Types of Services Provided

Grovelands Childcare has chosen flowers and trees to name the rooms the children are in. The individual child's own stages of development and not their age is taken into consideration before children move room. All transitions are discussed with parents prior to any room movement.

The Sunflower Room (Corran Riada, IDA Athlone and Tullamore)

Our tranquil, bright and cosy baby rooms are designed for babies from 3 months of age onwards, where a high level of individual attention is of paramount importance. Carefully designed for easy access for parents, our baby areas provide their own nappy changing and restful sleep facilities.

The Primrose Room

As soon as your child has started to find their feet, they may be ready to transition to the Sunflower Room. Here they will develop co-ordination skills and spend most of the day experimenting and exploring. They are kept very busy throughout the day with lots of sensory play and activities to promote their development.

The Bluebell Room

In this area your child will start to develop their verbal communication skills and begin to grow and retain lots of information and start to form their own ideas. A non-structured routine and a schedule of activities both indoors and outdoors is available daily, with lots of small and large group interactions, arts and crafts, discovery and exploration.

The Mulberry Room

In the Mulberry room, your child will begin to become accustomed to a rich stimulating environment while they experience the excitement of learning through play. Lots of different activities fill your child's day at this stage your child will now be able to choose the Activities that they are interested in.

The Sycamore Room

Your child will now start to prepare for Primary School becoming a lot more independent. A routine which allows for gardening, cookery, science, numeracy & literacy, arts & crafts, speech & drama, exploration, sensory play and large and small group activities will help give your child the skills they will require to transition to Primary School.

The Willow Room, The Cedar Room, The Chestnut Room & The Maple Room

The morning in these rooms are full of fun, laughter, hustle and bustle and activity. This 3 hour ECCE session allows for children to interact, Socialize, work together as a team and become part of a classroom to pre-prepare them for the next transition to Primary School.

In the Afternoon some of these room facilitates another sessional groups of pre-school children or After School Children. Children arrive after school and get welcomed with a warm home cooked meal or afternoon snack (varies by centre). Staff supervise and support

the children to complete written homework and then the after-School children become a close group of friends who develop and plan their own activities and games to suit their own Emerging Interests. After School games, toys and equipment are available for the children.

Hours and days open, contact numbers and age range of children catered for

Grovelands Childcare operates for 51 weeks of the year and closes on Bank holidays and Good Friday. Below is a list of contact numbers, the types of services available, opening hours* and the age range that the centres cater for:

- Grovelands Childcare
IDA Business Park, Athlone 090 64 86080
This centre caters for children aged between 3 months and 13 years of age.
This centre operates for full day care, sessional care, ECCE & After School Care.
Their opening times are from 7.45am-6.30pm.
Max Number Catered For: 150
Max Number of Children that attend on a daily basis 150
Number of Children Registered 150
- Grovelands Childcare
Corran Riada, Monksland, Athlone 090 6496177
This centre caters for children aged between 3 months and 13 years of age.
This centre operates for full day care, sessional care, ECCE & After School Care.
Their opening times are from 8am-6pm.
Max Number Catered For: 120
Max Number of Children that attend on a daily basis 120
Number of Children Registered 120
- Grovelands Childcare
Ballymahon Road, Athlone 090 6478525
This centre caters for children aged between 2 years 6 months and 13 years of age.
This centre operates for ECCE & After School Care only.
Their opening times are from 9am-6pm
Max Number Catered For: 33
Max Number of Children that attend on a daily basis 33
Number of Children Registered 33
- Grovelands Childcare
Market Point, Mullingar 044 9329269
This centre caters for children aged 2 years 8 months to 13 years of age
This centre operated for Full Day Care, Sessional care, ECCE & After School Care.
Their opening times are from 8.15am-6.15pm
Max Number Catered For: 150
Max Number of Children that attend on a daily basis 150
Number of Children Registered 150

- Grovelands Childcare
Sragh Business & Industrial Park, Clara Road, Tullamore 057 9328241
This centre caters for children aged 2 years to 13 years. This centre operated for Full Day Care, Sessional care, ECCE & After School Care. They do not operate for full day care. Their opening times are from 7.45am-6pm
Max Number Catered For: 150
Max Number of Children that attend on a daily basis 150
Number of Children Registered 150
- Grovelands Childcare
Millbrook, Athlone 090 6447532
This centre caters for children aged between 2 years 6 months and 13 years of age. This centre operates for ECCE & After School Care only.
Their opening times are from 9.30am-6pm
Max Number Catered For: 24
Max Number of Children that attend on a daily basis 24
Number of Children Registered 24

**Opening hours may change subject to demand*

Grovelands Childcare Management Structure

Directors

Managing Director:

Regina Bushell regina.bushell@grovelandschildcare.ie

Finance Director:

Ronan Bushell ronan.bushell@grovelandschildcare.ie

Director of Operations:

Deirdre Bushell dee.bushell@grovelandschildcare.ie

Senior Management

HR and Operations Manager:

Sinead Colleran sinead@grovelandschildcare.ie

Compliance and Environments Manager:

Avril Wingfield-Bastic avril.wb@grovelandschildcare.ie

Finance Manager:

Sharon Ball sharon.ball@grovelandschildcare.ie

Facilities Manager

Tracey Frampton Bushell accounts@grovelandschildcare.ie

Administration Manager

Sarah Sparkes admin@grovelandschildcare.ie

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Grovelands Childcare, Corran Riada, Monksland, Athlone

Centre Operations Manager Lorraine Coyle
Supervisors Fiona Jameson
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Grovelands Childcare, IDA Business & Technology Park, Athlone

Centre Operations Manager Breda Molloy
Supervisor Emer O'Keefe
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Grovelands Childcare, Ballymahon Road, Athlone

Centre Operations Manager Breda Molloy
Supervisor Aine Kelly
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Grovelands Childcare, Market Point, Mullingar

Centre Operations Manager Louise Flynn
Supervisor Rachel Dawson
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Grovelands Childcare, Sragh IDA Business & Technology Park, Clara Road, Tullamore

Centre Operations Manager Ann Nestor
Supervisors Graham Morrissey and Síofra Fennelly
E-Mail manager.sragh@grovelandschildcare.ie

Grovelands Childcare, Millbrook, Athlone

Centre Operations Manager Lorraine Coyle
Supervisor Amanda Rickard
E-Mail childcare.millbrook@grovelandschildcare.ie

Catering and Nutrition

Catering/ Nutrition Stephanie Healy Webb

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Admittance to Grovelands Childcare Policy

Grovelands Childcare are delighted that you have chosen us as your preferred early education and care provider. The policy below is to ensure the smooth operation of each centre and to help both you and your child to settle in.

Procedure for Admittance to Grovelands Childcare

- Parents are requested to view the centre and be introduced to the staff
- A settling in period is required for all children under 3 years of age
- The ethos of our service is to provide a home away from home
- Priority is always given to siblings attending Grovelands Childcare
- Your child's individual needs will be discussed and your needs as a parent will also be taken into consideration
- Children with Additional Needs & Requirements are welcome to attend once we can meet the need of the child, the staff and other children in the area and that parents engage with the supports such as the Access and Inclusion Model available in the setting (further information available on www.aim.gov.ie) The staff will work closely with and support parents where possible alongside the support of Better Start, AIM, Early Intervention Teams and other Government Agencies. Our goal is to meet the needs of all children and staff attending at all times.
- All Record forms, Permissions forms and Bank Mandates must be filled in and signed before your child can commence attending Grovelands Childcare
- Any allergies, dietary requirements or special circumstances should be disclosed and discussed at the booking stage prior to commencing attendance
- In order to secure your booking, you will be requested to pay €50 registration fee and half of one month's fee as a deposit.
- The setting in period and attendance date and times must be discussed with the manager in advance of commencement. Any changes of attendance days or times must be also discussed with the manager and one months' notice in writing must be provided.
- It is the duty of the parent to read these Parents Policies and Procedures. You will be required to sign to state that this has been explained to you by management. These are also available on the Parents Section of the Grovelands Childcare website (www.grovelandschildcare.ie). A hard copy is also available in the centre.
- The Grovelands Childcare Policies on the Payment of Fees and Infection Control should be particularly noted.

Registration, Fees and Deposits

In order to secure your booking, you will be requested to pay €50 non refundable Registration fee, a half of 1 month's fee as a deposit (which will be deducted from your final months fees provided one month's notice in writing is given) along with a completed direct debit mandate form.

The first month's fee or part thereof (depending on start date) is required to be paid, in advance of the first day of the settling in period, by card in the center. The direct debit will be

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run on the 4th of each month or the first available banking day thereafter. Parents will be notified of the invoice amount due by email 14 days in advance of the direct debit date.

Children only attending on the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for the scheme hours will be required to pay a refundable deposit of €100 to secure the booking. Deposits will be returned once the child is registered and approved on the ECCE system.

Non-payment of fees will result in suspension of care until fees are up to date.

Open Door Procedure

Whilst Grovelands Childcare has an open-door policy in place, which means registered parents, are free to visit at any time of the day we would ask parents to be aware of busy times when our first priority are the children in our care. If parents wish to discuss anything in particular please make an appointment with the manager in order that you may have our undivided attention.

Bringing Personal Items into Grovelands Childcare

Grovelands Childcare would prefer if personal items were not brought in as this causes upset between children. We do not take any responsibility for any items brought in from home. Coats and clothes should be clearly marked with the child's name and while we take as much care as possible, we are not responsible for any clothes that go missing. Flexibility is given to personal attachments such as a blanket or teddy. Parents will need to discuss this with the manager and may be required to purchase a second similar item in order to have one on the premises, which will reduce your stress should it be forgotten in the centre!

Once a month however, all children will have a 'Show and Tell Day' where they can bring in an item from home. This can be any item of interest to your child to discuss and talk about during group circle times. Please be aware that we do not take responsibility for these items and we request that nothing is brought in that is of any real or personal value.

Meetings with Parents

The manager may request meetings with parents from time to time to discuss the development of your child, room transitions, fees or to give feedback or discuss any concerns you or we may have. Please understand that the manager requires parents to work closely in partnership with them to ensure the best interests of your child is met at all times. Meeting may be recorded for verification purposes.



Payment of Fees Policy

Payment of Fees

Fees are payable 52 weeks of the year regardless of bank holidays, good Friday, force majeure days, emergency closures and Christmas Breaks. The centres overheads do not diminish if a child is absent therefore there is no reduction for vacation or any of the above closure reasons.

Managers will review situations where a child becomes ill long-term on an individual basis.

Sick days, absent days or holidays cannot be swapped as the staff have to abide by the 2016 Regulations and adhere to adult to child ratios.

All fees are due the first week of every month and will be collected via Direct Debit. All fees are payable regardless of whether or not a child is in attendance. For the safety of the staff and children we do not accept any cheques or cash payments and card facilities are available to make payments in exceptional circumstances.

ECCE Fees and Attendance

Grovelands Childcare registers children on a 5-day basis on the ECCE Scheme. It is important and the responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends 5 days a week as a pattern of non-attendance can affect your funding and entitlements.

With regard to the children attending under the ECCE scheme in Full Day Care, monthly fees are reduced by the amount of the Government subsidy at the appropriate rate which may vary from year to year. Provided your child continues to meet the eligibility criteria, the reduction will apply to the months September to the following June in line with the conditions and duration of the Scheme. Full day care fees for children on the ECCE Scheme are payable monthly.

National Childcare Scheme (NCS) and earlier Government Schemes

With regard to the children attending under the NCS or any earlier Government funded scheme, monthly fees are reduced by the amount of the approved Government subsidy. If your child qualifies under NCS you will receive a CHICK as part of the application process with NCS website (HIVE). The CHICK is activated once you as a parent have confirmed the hours of attendance on the HIVE. Your subsidy will only apply from the date of confirmation. Provided your child continues to meet the attendance criteria associated with their CHICK, the subsidy will apply for the duration covered by the CHICK.

Where there is a change to the number of subsidised hours which results in an underpayment, this underpayment will be recovered in the following months Direct Debit payment. Should your child become non-compliant with the rules of the scheme the subsidy will cease and full fees will be payable.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

Non-Payment of Fees

As per our policy, all fees are to be paid within the first week of every month. If for some reason fees are not paid on time, managers will send out an invoice so that the balance owed can be paid immediately. Management reserves the right to apply an administration charge of €5 in the month for recurring late payment. Please note if an account shows a continuous balance that is owed, Grovelands Childcare reserves the right to cease attendance until the balance has been cleared. Fees will not be allowed to go over 2 weeks into arrears.

Withdrawing a child from Grovelands Childcare

Grovelands Childcare requires one month's written notice, of the date your child will cease attending. One month's fee can be paid in lieu of notice. Where applicable the deposit paid on admittance to Grovelands Childcare will be deducted from the final payment. Registration fees are non-refundable. Deposits will be lost if you choose to withdraw an application for a reserved place in Grovelands Childcare.

Family Reductions

Grovelands Childcare offers a 10% sibling reduction to the second child or subsequent children under 3 years. The same applies for children that attend for afterschool. Managers will discuss any family discount available to you at the time of enrolment.

Annual Review of Fee's

Grovelands Childcare reviews their fees annually. Any changes to the fees will be notified to parents individually with one month's notice of any changes.

Holding Spaces

Grovelands Childcare does not hold spaces open for children. Due to a high demand in each of our centres children's fees and attendance cannot be temporarily ceased for periods throughout the year. All fees are payable over 12 months/52 weeks of the year. The child will have to be withdrawn (see procedure above) and a new registration completed to re-commence. In that event we cannot guarantee that we will have availability to facilitate this.



Settling In Policy

Once all correct payments, documentation and paperwork is completed for your child the manager will go through a settling in period that will work for the room and the needs of your child. Your child will be allocated a Key Worker who will help your child settle into the room.

Key Workers

All room staff are divided into Key Workers. Each child in a room is assigned to a Key Worker to allow them to build close relationships and also to create a continuity of care for your child

A sample of the settling in period for a sessional child is as follows:

- First Day - Parent stays with child in the room and encourages child to interact with peers and join in with activities. Adult chairs are available for parents to sit on whilst settling in the rooms (30mins)
- Second Day – Parent stays for a while in the room and then tells child that they just have to leave the room for a short amount of time. Parent ensures child is aware that they are returning and can sit on couches provided at reception. Parent should return after a few minutes to room and if possible, repeat this process again during this session (30mins)
- Third Day – Parent comes into room and then tells child that they have to leave for short time and return – parent leaves room for longer period (30mins) At home parent should encourage child to wave by the following day and ensure they understand that you will be returning
- Forth Day – Parent waves by to child and encourages child to wave back. Parent can leave premises but must return after 30 mins
- Fifth Day – repeat of forth day but child can be left for 1 hour

No child will be left upset for long periods of time when becoming familiar with Grovelands Childcare. The manager will always contact parents if they feel it is necessary. If concerned about separation Anxiety please discuss with staff, information handouts and additional support can also be made available by the manager.

Children with an additional need must be capable of taking instructions before been taken on outings. They may also require a parent to accompany them for these outings depending on the individual child and their individual need.

Families are encouraged to share:

- Information about their child's temperament and dispositions.
- Information about what upsets their child and what comforts them.
- How their child reacts to strangers, familiar adults and other children.
- How they handle routines such as eating, toileting and sleeping.
- Relevant information about themselves and their culture.
- Information about their child's previous experiences.

- A brief developmental and medical history of their child – from birth to the present – that includes social, emotional, physical and language development information.
- How parents/guardians prefer to communicate different types of information (for example, in person, by telephone, by notice board or individually in writing).
- How they wish to be involved in the service programme.
- How they would like to see the transition period happen.
- Their hopes for their child.

Transitioning to Another Room

If your child is developmentally ready to transition to the next room, the manager or staff will discuss this with you. Parents will get a letter to state who will become their child's new key worker and are also asked if they would like to meet with the staff beforehand to discuss any individual needs if requested. Parents are introduced to the area and staff and are welcomed to ask any questions or address concerns they may have.

Your child will transition to the next area over a period of weeks. They will visit the area during the day and will start to become familiar with staff and children. The manager will facilitate time during the day to allow your child's key worker to support them during this transition.

Once the settling in period into the next room has been completed the new key worker will inform the parent so that the child can then start to be brought in and collected from the new room.

If a child becomes upset and wants to move to the next area sooner or in a situation where a child is finding it difficult to adjust, managers will discuss a plan to support the child.

Key workers will meet before the move takes place and discuss the child's individual needs and routines.

Routines and transitions within the daily programme of activities

- Children can attend to personal routines, such as going to the toilet, according to their individual body schedules.
- Children have easy access to their transitional objects when they want or need them and are given time and understanding to help them to become more able to manage longer periods without them.
- While balancing the range of activities (active/quiet, small group/large group/individual, indoors/outdoors), routines and transitions are kept to a minimum and managed consistently so that children can develop trust and a sense of security.
- Transitions within the daily routine, although managed consistently, are as flexible as possible to allow for children to follow their interests where possible.
- Transitions that must happen, involving moving from one type of activity to another, are planned so that children who are ready before others have something to do while they wait.
- Children are given advance notice visually [for example with an interactive visual routine and or large egg timers] of changes to routines or planned changes within the schedule of activities that will affect them.

- It is considered important to recognise that some children need to be given more time, support and assistance to cope with changes in activity levels and/or types of activities, than others.
- If the furniture is going to be changed around or major changes made to the environment, this is discussed with the children and explained in advance so that they can be involved and understand why the change is happening.
- Children can participate in helping with routines as much as they are able (for example helping to set the table or cleaning up)

Guidance on saying good-bye and moving on

Relationships are very important to children. Although children may not always express or understand their feelings, these feelings do exist and are sometimes expressed in ways that make it difficult for parents and other adults to deal with them. The following suggestions can help children accept changes and deal with them in appropriate ways.

- Prepare the child by giving them some notice when a relationship is about to change. (For example, tell them, “Sam is going to be moving soon, and he won’t be able to come and play every day”).
- Help the child understand their feelings by using words like lonely, worried, sad or unhappy to describe how they might be feeling if they are showing signs of such feelings.
- Put things in perspective (For example, “We won’t see Ava as much now but you will still have Sophie and Joe to play with”).
- Help the child express the meaning of the relationship by encouraging them to make a card, draw a picture or make a small gift. Let them know that relationships are very important by creating an opportunity to express affection and validate their feelings.
- Focus on the positives associated with change. When people grow and move forward, there will always be changes in relationships. New teachers, new friends, and changes in activities are part of life.
- Share with the child some of your own experiences in leaving valued relationships. Tell them how you felt at that time.
- Create a memento. Children are concrete thinkers and having a physical reminder reassures them that the relationship was shared and is an important part of their lives.

Transitioning to Primary School

Staff and parents will communicate regularly to ensure each child is emotionally and academically ready for the transition to Primary School from pre-school. Before this transition takes place, the Pre-school will work on “Going to Big School” as a theme as part of their Curriculum. This is an exciting time for children and parents and our aim is to support your child during this transition. Staff where possible will try use photos of local Primary Schools to discuss during circle times and group times.

The Pre-School children also complete ‘Aistear Books’ throughout the year that become lovely memorabilia for parents about their time spent in pre-school. These books also include a baseline Assessment for each child that acknowledges the stage of development they are at.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

Your child's Key Worker will speak with you individually if they feel that your child would benefit from an extra year in the pre-school.

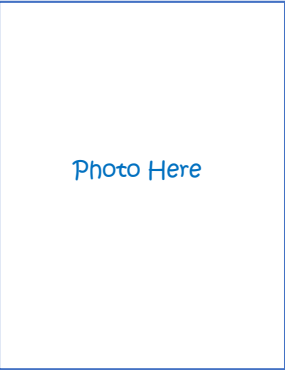
We also suggest to parents to bring children to the Primary School open days so that they can familiarise themselves with this new environment

A sample of a transitioning Sheet will follow this page.

Transition Sheet Under 2 years

Date: _____ Completed by: _____

Room Leaving: _____ Room Entering: _____



My Name: _____

DOB: _____ Gender: _____

My Parents names: _____

Allergies that I have: _____

Dietary Needs: _____

I like to eat: _____

I have comfort items such as blankets/ soother or teddys and here are the times I really need them: _____

I don't like to eat: _____

I separate from my parents:

Easily need some time with difficulty

My favourite Activity is: _____

I like it when: _____

If I'm upset I need you to: _____

My usual daily routine is:



Administration of Medications Policy

If your child is unwell, the best place for them to be is at home. Parents have a responsibility and a duty of care to their children, which also impacts on the other children and staff in the centre. We request that you keep your child at home if they are running a high temperature or showing other symptoms of ill health. In line with Tusla regulations if a child arrives unwell to the centre you will be asked to bring your child home. Similarly, if your child becomes unwell during the day, we will call you to come and collect your child.

Administration of Medications

Grovelands Childcare “Administration of Medications Policy” ensures the safe storage and administration of medication in our centres to an early year’s child. Parents are required to complete and sign the “Medicine Administration Forms” before medication can be given.

Managers and staff must take appropriate actions to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children in our care. This includes administering medication if required, especially in an emergency situation.

Please Note:

- Children who start an antibiotic must be out for 24 hours after first dosage
- The service will only accept prescribed medicines that have been provided in the original container marked with the date, name of the dispensing pharmacist, expiry date and clear directions. The service will only administer medications as prescribed and will not change this at the request of parents without a registered medical practitioner’s written direction. The service reserves the right to contact a health care professional if authorised staff members are unsure about administering medication to a child, even if the parent/guardian has requested the medication to be administered.
- Parents’ consent, and signatures must be on administration forms before antibiotic can be administered
- Parents remain responsible for ensuring that the service has adequate supplies of the medication their child needs (prescription and non-prescription) and renewing any medication for chronic conditions.

Administration of Antibiotic or Steroid Medication

- Appointed staff member will administer medication.
- A further staff member will double check dosage, child’s name on medication and the medicine administration form to ensure everything is accurate before administering medication.
- Two staff members must be present to administer correct Medication. Experienced staff to administer and second staff to sign as witness of Administration.
- Grovelands Childcare will not administer cough medicines to children. Please discuss this with management if required.

Administration of Calpol or Nurofen Medication

Grovelands Childcare does not administer medications to reduce fevers in the first 4 hours of attendance however, if required parents can come into centre and administer required dosage during this time if required. This is to ensure an overdose of medication does not occur.

If it is the case that staff need to administer Calpol, managers or team leaders will contact the parent via telephone for permission, parents will be required to sign the medicine administration form on collection of their child. If parent cannot be contacted the manager will make a decision judged on the best interest of the child if staff are to administer Calpol or the equivalent.

Parents must sign that Calpol or Nurofen can be administered to their child during the Admittance stages of settling into the centre in the permissions form.

Calpol or its equivalent on the market will only be administered under the guidance of the parent's wishes, observing the manufacturer's guidelines or medical advice.

Calpol Manufacturers Guidelines

3-6 months	2.5ml
6-24 months	5ml
2-4 years	7.5ml
4-6 years	10ml

For children 6-12years that are attending on a full day basis during term time we will follow guidelines for Calpol/Nurofen 6+.

Grovelands Childcare will only administer Calpol or the equivalent if a child has a fever of 37.5° or above. Parents are required to supply a bottle of Calpol to leave in the centre.

It is recommended that children who is still running a fever after 2 doses may need to see a doctor to ensure that the fever is not due to a more serious infection.

Procedures if a Childs Temperature rises above a safe limit (38° or higher)

If a child's temperature continues to rise after 30 minutes of administering Calpol or the equivalent a follow up call will be made to the parent by the manger or supervisor to advise them to come collect their child. This is to ensure the health and safety of the child and the other children in the centre.

You are requested to ensure you have emergency contact on call if you are unavailable to collect your child as Grovelands Childcare does not have additional staff to care for a sick child requiring one to one care. Please ensure that you have provided up to date phone numbers and addresses for any emergency contacts.

In this situation the designated person in charge will do the following while explaining to the child that we are going to help them feel better and cool down:

- We will bring your child to a quieter area.
- If required we will remove excess outer clothing of the child
- Gently pat the child down with tepid water (where necessary)
- We will record body temperatures are recorded in room diary and times they were taken
- Your child will be offered small drinks of water regularly
- Feedback will be given on collection of your child on their overall wellbeing that day

Storage of Medications

Medications will be stored in the centre fridge. Please note that no medications are stored in the children's room and parents are requested to hand over medication to staff on arrival. Please do not leave medications in your child's bag.

Administration of Suppositories, Adrenaline Auto Injectors or Subcutaneous Injections.

Where the administration of medications requires technical skills e.g. injection or suppositories which are beyond the scope of the staff in the service, Grovelands Childcare will seek guidance/training from the relevant professional in consultation with the parent. Any fees incurred with this training are the sole responsibility of the parent. The manager along with the parent will draw up an Individual Care Plan for each child in these situations.

Administration of Inhalers

Parents will be required to train the relevant staff on the correct procedure to Administer an Inhaler. Grovelands Childcare may request a letter from the child's GP to state that the child has been given an Inhaler and the recommended dosage to be given. If Inhalers are to be given daily a written request signed by the parent must be on the child's individual file. Please request that your pharmacist place the dosage label on the inhaler rather than on the box. Inhalers will be stored in First Aid Cabinets in the centre.

Individual Care Plans for Administering Medication

An "Individual Care Plan" is required to drawn up by the parents with the management and staff before a child starts in the centre where there is a specific medical need. The manager or designated person in charge will follow the individual care plan if and when required.

The Individual Care Plan states:

- the specific medical need of the child
- their medical history
- detail step by step actions to be taken in an emergency situation
- the names of the staff trained to administer specific medication
- emergency numbers for the parents
- Location where the specific medication for that child is stored
- what signs to look out for and when if required, staff need to ring the emergency services
- These plans are to be signed by the parents, manager, trained staff, key worker and the child's healthcare practitioner and will be stored at reception and also in the child's own room.

[A sample copy of a sample allergy care plan will follow this page](#)

[A sample copy of our Medication administration form will follow this page](#)



Individual Care Plan

Allergen: Eggs

_____ cannot consume any food with egg products expect for baked sponge, lady fingers biscuits, muffins, cake and Boudoir. _____ is also very sensitive if he encounters anyone that has being contaminated with eggs. We need to be very mindful if any staff or children are handling eggs or eating egg products. Please ensure that there is handwashing after any contact with eggs.

Signs to look out For:

- Hives will appear if _____ comes in contact with someone that has had eggs
- Rash around his mouth and neck
- _____ will become more irritable and quite upset

Emergency Procedure in Place:

- Give antihistamine. Follow recommended dose for his age as per instructions of the product
- Contact parents

1. _____
2. _____

_____ antihistamine is stored in the first aid box in the kitchen

Parent Signature: _____

Accidents and Incidents Involving Medications

- Where a child refuses to take the medication prescribed for them, they must not be forced to do so but parents/guardians must be informed as a matter of urgency. If the child not taking the medication leads to an emergency situation, the emergency services and the parents must be called.
- Failure to administer medication at the time prescribed as requested by a health care professional or parent/guardian should be noted on the Medication Administration Form (Appendix B) with a written explanation of why the medication was not given.
- If a child is mistakenly given another child's medication, a doctor must be called immediately and the advice given must be followed. The parents of the child who mistakenly received the medication must be called as soon as possible.
- The poisons information line number, GP, Pharmacist and other emergency numbers must be readily available at all times.

Dealing with Emergencies

Where medication is administered in the case of an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency, both the emergency services and the child's parents/guardians must be notified as soon as possible. All relevant staff members need to know where to obtain First Aid and how to summon the emergency services.

- Where a child is taken to hospital by ambulance, they must be accompanied by a member of staff who is to remain with them until a parent/guardian arrives (See Accidents and Incidents Policy and Procedures).
- All required information is shared with the emergency services and the child's parents/guardians.
- Staff support is essential following any such incident.

School Aged Children Who Self Administer Medication

Self-administration of medicines in Grovelands Childcare approved by parents and healthcare professionals, gives the child greater independence, and enables them to participate in their own care and make informed decisions about their treatment in partnership with Staff and management. Management need to ensure that self-administration is implemented and operated in a safe and consistent way to minimise any potential risks. A detailed Individual Care Plan will be drawn up with the parent and child in partnership with the manager to ensure risks are identified and addressed.

All medications will be checked by two staff members before administration. The staff members will then sign the medicine administration record form to show they have supervised the administration of the medicine.

Medication Consent Form:

Consent for Calpol/Nurofen is given on child permissions form and recorded on the child's individual administration of medication form. Where a child requires any service approved medication the form over leaf is to be completed.

[A sample copy of our Medication Consent Form will follow this page](#)



MEDICATION CONSENT FORM

Child's Full Name:	
Child's Address:	
Date of Birth:	
Details of Medical Condition i.e. what medicine is for.	
Name of Medicine:	
Name and contact details of prescriber:	
Dosage of Medicine:	
Route for administration of medicine (circle correct one)	Oral (by mouth) Topical (rub in) Inhale Injection Rectal
Frequency of dosage <i>or</i> times to be given:	
Effective from:	Date:
Effective to:	Date:
Any other information e.g. side effects, potential adverse reaction or special precautions:	
How the medication is to be stored (as on directions given on medication label)	
Printed name of parent:	
Signature of parent or guardian authorising medicine:	
Date:	
Staff member Signature:	



Accidents and Incidents Policy

At Grovelands Childcare it is our policy promote the health, wellbeing and personal safety of all our children and staff. Through developing and regularly reviewing accident and incident prevention procedures and fire safety. Although we adhere to all safety procedures and follow Tusla guidelines & the Childcare Regulations accidents can occur. Unfortunately, children do have minor incidents/accidents. Parents/Carers are responsible for all medical bills, which may arise from accidents or incident.

The Measures taken to prevent accidents and incidents

- Children are adequately supervised at all times while indoors and outdoors
- Staff adhere to correct adult to child ratios set out by the Childcare Regulations 2016
- Staff have a clear understanding of each child and their stage of development
- Managers are available to support staff if required
- Managers undertake reviews and risk assessments of the environments both indoors and outdoors regularly to ensure to minimise hazards
- Daily, weekly and monthly site safety checks are completed both in the indoor and outdoor environments
- Senior management regularly inspect centres
- Staff ensure the children appropriately use the equipment and materials in the service
- Grovelands Childcare has completed a safety statement
- Using safety equipment for children, such as car seats and seat belts
- Ensuring that no cords are accessible to children, in particular cords on blinds.
- Ensuring that all hazardous cleaning materials are stored in a locked cupboard out of reach of children.
- Keeping all electric cords out of reach of the children.
- Understanding what children can do at different stages of development. Children learn by testing their abilities. They should be allowed to participate in activities appropriate for their stage of development even though these activities may possibly result in some minor injuries, such as scrapes and bruises.

Procedures followed in the event of an Accident or Incident

- All staff are aware of their roles and act in accordance with their responsibilities in the event of an accident/incident
- Staff that are trained in first aid will make assessment of injury
- Staff will get the support of the manager or supervisor if required
- Child if possible, will be brought to first aid station to be further assessed
- In the case of a more serious accident, the child must not be moved and must be kept warm.
- Immediate First aid will be applied
- If an ambulance is needed the person administering First Aid must ask the manager or designated person in charge to call for the ambulance.

- The manager or person in charge will contact the child's parents/guardians or, if they can't be reached, their named emergency contact person to advise them of the incident.
- If the child has to go to the hospital before the parents/guardians arrive, an adult known to the child must accompany the child and stay until a parent/guardian arrives.
- The manager or designated person in charge is to decide which staff member should accompany the child.
- A parent/guardian is to be asked to sign an accident/incident report form as soon as possible to confirm their notification of the accident/incident.
- Out of concern for all of the children and families attending the service, in the case of an accident involving a child we would wish to contact the child's parent on the day following the accident/incident to know how the child is recovering.
- The manager will notify Túsla and the Insurance broker if required

This centres Eircode is _____

The centre is located near: _____

Procedure for notifying parents of accidents or incidents

In the case of minor incidents such as minor scrapes, bumps or falls the manager will forward a text message to the parents notifying them that a minor accident or incident has occurred and asking that the parent contact the centre at their earliest convenience, This is to minimise disturbing parents from their working day where the accident is minor and the child is content following the accident/incident.

For a more serious accident such as a biting incident, cuts, more serious bumps e.g. to the head, or where medical treatment is required, we will call the parent/guardian to inform them of the accident and incident and where necessary, advise them to come and assess the child.

Records of Accidents/ Incidents

Parents/ Carers will be asked to sign the accident/ Incident form of their child on collection of their child. This form states the details of the injury/accident, How the injury/accident occurred, the staff in the area, the manager, the time of the incident/accident, the equipment involved if applicable, the staff member who applied first aid and the length of time ice packs or equivalent were applied. Parents/Carers are advised to keep the copy of these forms and the original copy then is put in the child's individual file.

You may also be requested to sign an accident/incident form if your child has caused harm or injury to another child or staff member.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

Period of Time Accidents and Incident Records are kept

Grovelands Childcare will keep child Accident & Incident forms for the suggested time of 2 years after the child has ceased attendance as requested under the Early Years regulations 2016.

Review of Accidents/Incidents

The manager will work alongside senior management to review any accidents/incidents where equipment is involved. If required they will review and make any changes required.

A Copy of an accident and incident Form

Grovelands Childcare Athlone Monksland		Date: 26 July 2018
Accident Report:		RIDDOR <input type="checkbox"/>
Date 26/07/2018	Time 14 23	
Dob	Age Now	Age at Accident
Staff Reporting		
Senior Officer		
Nursery Manager		
Staff Present		
Location		
Equipment		
Injury		
Description of Accident/Incident		
Details of Injury		
First Aiders		
Action Taken		
Observation Record/ Medication/ Follow Up		
Parents Informed:	No	Sent: at
SIGNED (Report Author):	_____	Date: _____
SIGNED (First Aider):	_____	Date: _____
SIGNED (Parent/Carer):	_____	Date: _____
SIGNED (Nursery Manager):	_____	Date: _____



School Aged Childcare Policy

The School Aged Programme

Our varied and stimulating School Aged Childcare programme introduces school age children to large range of interesting events and activities. The programme includes arts and crafts, drama, chess, Lego, board games, sports, dance and many, many more activities that are fully led by the children themselves supported and encouraged along the way with the staff.

The School aged children can bring in a change of clothes to avoid uniforms getting dirty. We recommend that where possible all children starting school in September should be brought to and collected from school during the first week by their parents in order to build security and confidence in the new school experience. School bus arrangements are the responsibility of parents/careers.

Grovelands Childcare reserves the right to discontinue attendance if a child's behaviour causes injury or upset to other children or staff and where we are unable to meet a child's unique needs – such a decision will not be made lightly. Parents are requested to ensure that staff are fully informed of any concerns regarding behaviour or development at the time of enrolment.

Out of School Hours

Grovelands Childcare requires a list of all half days and mid-term breaks for your child's school at the beginning of the School year. Parents who require full day care or additional hours for their school aged child/children outside of normal afterschool hours must book required days and hours in advance with the manager. A fee for extra hours will be discussed with you by the manager and this is required to be paid in advance of booked days. Please note that it may not always be possible to facilitate your child outside of their normal attendance at short notice due to space and staffing regulations.

Home Cooked Hot Meals (n/a for Ballymahon Road Service)

When the children arrive from School there will be set times in each of the centres for the children to sit down in small or large groups to enjoy a home cooked hot meal. These meals are cooked freshly each day and will follow the 3-week menu plan for the centre. Although these meals are provided, we still suggest that the children will require a meal when they arrive home. The children will be encouraged to set tables and to socialise with one another during meal times.

School Collections

It is your responsibility as parents to advise teachers and principals that your child is attending Grovelands Childcare for our School Aged Childcare service and that you provide them with the centre number.

It is also extremely important that if a parent or relative will be collecting your child from school that ample notice is given to staff in Grovelands Childcare to inform them that the child will not be attending after School. Grovelands Childcare Centres have an Emergency plan in situations where a child has not arrived into the centre. It is not the responsibility of Grovelands Childcare to ensure the child is on the bus.

School Aged Homework

There is a set time in the afternoon for homework supervision. Staff will supervise written homework during this time. It is the parent's responsibility to check homework, complete written homework and to sign homework journals.

Puberty

In recent years children are reaching puberty at a much younger age. If a school aged child has reached this stage of development, we would ask that parents leave a supply of sanitary products in the centre for their child. These will be stored in the staff toilet for the sole use of your child should a situation arise.

In all cases it is the responsibility of the parent to discuss what happens during puberty with their child before they reach that stage of development. We have experienced children reaching this stage as young as ten years old.

Bus Pick Up Service

Whilst some of our Grovelands Childcare Centres provide transport to and from school the remainder of our Grovelands Childcare Centres transport services are organised by local bus companies.

It is the parent's responsibility to organise payments and times for bus pickups for their children/child directly with the transport provider.

The Grovelands Childcare Centres that do offer pick up please note that spaces are limited and the following applies:

- You are requested to notify in advance the centre manager or supervisor where your child is not required to be collected by Grovelands Childcare to avoid unnecessary concern for either the child or the staff member on pick up duty.
- A fee will apply for this service which will be set out at the beginning of the school year
- Fees for transport will be paid in accordance with individual family childcare schedules
- As we serve a number of schools in close range of each other it is not possible to be at every school at exact finishing times. Parents are therefore asked to make arrangements with the School until a staff member from Grovelands Childcare arrives to collect your child.
- You are advised that it is your responsibility to inform us without delay of any changes to your agreed school aged childcare collections.
- Children are required to wear their seatbelts and abide by the rules of the bus service during transportation to and from the centre.
- Please note that we deserve the right to discontinue a school aged childcare service or collection services if parents do not work in partnership with the manager and staff.

Child Leaving the School Aged Childcare Service Unaccompanied:

During the hours that the children are in Grovelands Childcare, children must not leave unaccompanied. They must be signed out by an adult unless prior arrangement has been made.

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 is the priority of Grovelands Childcare at all times Leaving the premises unauthorised is considered a serious behaviour issue.

Bullying

Grovelands Childcare 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 is not tolerated, and we have specific steps we follow in the event of bullying. Grovelands Childcare 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 _____ (room leader/manager) 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 Grovelands Childcare to liaise with the child/children's school. If a bullying issue is also ongoing at school, Grovelands Childcare and the school will communicate about the approach. Following identification of a bullying issue, Grovelands Childcare 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. Grovelands Childcare is committed to preventing cyberbullying in our service.

The following guidelines are followed:

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

- The children in Grovelands Childcare are not permitted to have a mobile phone switched on while on the premises and grounds.
- The computers/tablets in Grovelands Childcare have blocked all social media website. This limits access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online.
- Parents are requested to update Named Service of any potential cyberbullying incidents they are aware of.
- Children are required to report any incident of cyberbullying to Grovelands Childcare

Equal Opportunities

It is the intent Of Grovelands Childcare to respect the individuality of all children and adults involved in our service and to promote positive attitudes to differences of culture, race, gender, language and economic circumstances.

Complaints or Concerns of a School Aged Child

The Grovelands Childcare Grievance and Management of Complaints Policy is displayed in the Parents area of the centre. This policy is available and will be communicated to all parents, guardians and school aged children. There will be a School Aged Childcare meeting taking place with the children at the beginning of each school year to discuss and agree our Policies and Procedures with the children attending the service.

Grovelands Childcare displays a 'talk to us' poster in our School Aged Childcare area to encourage the School Aged Children to come and talk to us if they are worried about something or not happy about something.

A copy of our 'Talk to Us' poster will follow this page

Talk To Us

You are welcome to come and talk to us any time

As a child/young person attending Grovelands Childcare, is there anything you are unhappy about?

If you have a comment or complaint about Grovelands Childcare, please tell us as soon as possible.

You can speak to your Key Worker directly or speak to _____, the manager.

We are always here to listen to you.

If you would prefer to write it down, you can give the manager or supervisor a letter or send us an email on childcare.corranriada@grovelandschildcare.ie. You can also ask your mum or dad, granny or grandad, aunt or uncle to make a complaint to Grovelands Childcare.

If you need help with making a complaint, please ask any staff member in Grovelands Childcare. We will acknowledge any complaint you make as soon as possible, no more than 5 days after you have made the complaint. When we receive a complaint from you, we will investigate that complaint in the same way that we would investigate a complaint that comes in from an adult.

We take all complaints seriously and we will listen to all children that make a complaint about Grovelands Childcare. We will try to make improvements based on complaints and always try to resolve the issue that is causing you concern.

Grovelands Childcare aims to deal with all complaints within 1 month. You will always be kept informed about your complaint, please let us know how you would like us to update you.

We will talk to you about your complaint if we have questions or need to find out more about what happened.

After our investigation in to the complaint we will let you know what we find out and the changes, if any, we are going to make in Grovelands Childcare because of the complaint.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, please let us know and you will have an opportunity to appeal it. The appeal of the complaint will be looked after by different people in Grovelands Childcare than those who looked after the complaint the first time.



We all want you to be happy



Authorisation to Collect Children Policy

In today's society it is becoming increasingly more important to have fool proof security procedures for the collection of the children in our care. The main entrance to Grovelands Childcare will remain secure at all times and cannot be accessed by any of the children or non-authorised personnel. These measures are in place for not only the protection of the children but also for the protection of the staff on the premises.

Entering and Leaving the Building

- Parents are responsible for their child/children when entering or leaving the premises
- Please always ensure the front door has connected to the magnets and has closed fully once you've entered or exited
- Parents please note that front doors due to fire regulations are heavy and would be dangerous for children to open and close. Please ensure children are supervised at these doors to prevent any accidents.
- Please drive with care in the area around Grovelands Childcare and be aware of children in the area at all times
- Grovelands Childcare does not take any responsibility for any vehicles parked on our premises
- Please always be vigilant of parents and children when entering and exiting the area. Never allow another child to exit the building without an adult.
- On daily arrival at the service, parents/guardians/carers must ensure that they make direct contact with an appropriate member of staff. This is for the child's safety and is also an important opportunity to share any information that is relevant to their child's care, wellbeing and development for the day (see Settling-In Policy).
- Parents are required to sign their children in and out of Grovelands Childcare through our First Steps monitor app. It is vital that children are logged in and out promptly as the tablets are used during fire drills and outings for roll call etc. you can log in via the tablet at reception or in your child's room. Use of tablets is also covered in our data protection and multi-media policies
- Car parking is provided outside all of our centres and we are aware that it can be difficult to get parking near the door during the rush hours in the morning and evenings. However, it is not acceptable for parents to park on or around the roundabouts (if applicable) as this impedes the entry and exit to and from the centre for other parents
- Parents/guardians/authorised carers are to present to an appropriate staff member when arriving to take their child/ren from the service.

Supervision of Children during collection times

- Please do not let your child/children leave the premises without your full supervision, as the outside of the premises can be very busy
- Please do not leave your child/children unsupervised in the outdoor area
- Grovelands Childcare will not assume responsibility for children when entering and leaving the premises

Who is Authorised to collect your child?

When admitting a child to attend Grovelands Childcare you will be requested to fill out a Child Record Form. On the Child Record form, it will ask you to state the people who are authorised to collect your child. It is important that you list who other than parents are authorised to collect your child and also include contact numbers for these people. Parents are asked on the Child Record Forms to also state a password that can be used in collections. If you require somebody other than who is authorised on the child record form written permission needs to be given from the parent to the centre manager that includes dates, times and contact details in prior notice to these collections. Children can only be authorised to leave the building with persons aged 18 years and above. A form of ID may be required to prove age and identity.

The Procedure when a non-authorised person arrives to collect your child

If a non-authorised person arrives to collect your child, the manager will try to make contact with Parents immediately. No child will be let go out of the centre with a non-authorised person. In cases where the manager cannot make contact with the parent, they will then make contact with the Emergency contact person on the Child's Record Form. If we feel that the situation is getting out of control or if the person is threatening towards staff or the children in our care in any way, management will contact An Garda Síochána.

A custodial parent has the right to request that the service does not allow another parent to visit or call for the child, provided that the custodial parent makes the request in writing and shows the provider a dated letter from a solicitor confirming the existence of a certified copy of the relevant Court Order. Only a Court can limit the guardianship rights of parents even where they have separated or divorced.

Late Collections and charges

In the event of a late collection parents are requested to immediately contact the manager or staff and inform them that they are delayed, prior to the closing time of the centre. We ask parents to please understand that many of our staff members are also parents and also have family commitments.

A fee of €10 will be charged to a parent for late collections.

If a parent/carer continues to collect their child/children late, the manager will meet with the parent. If the collections continue to be late after meetings with the manager the future of your child's attendance at Grovelands Childcare will be reviewed by Senior Management alongside the manager. Grovelands Childcare reserves the right to discontinue the attendance of a child due to continuation of Late Collections.

Procedure for when a Child is not Collected

In the event a child is not collected by the parent and parents cannot be contacted, the manager or staff responsible at the time will try to get in contact with the Emergency person stated on the child's record form.

Two members of staff will have to remain on the premises until the child is collected. The late collection fee above will be charged.

If no contact can be made with parents or Emergency contact on the Childs record, the staff member in charge on the premises will need to contact local authorities.

Parents/guardians/carers who arrive for children in an ‘unfit state’

It may happen that a person arrives for a child in an ‘unfit state’ due to illness, drugs or alcohol. Where the condition is severe, it may be quite distressing for staff members who have concerns for the child's safety and/or wellbeing.

The Children First Act 2015, Article 10 requires that a provider of a relevant service shall ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service. In this regard **we will always act in the child’s best interests**. In the case of a nominated carer who is not a guardian, the parent/guardian should be contacted immediately.

In the case of a parent/guardian being in an unfit state, the following measures may be adopted where appropriate:

1. Attempt to get the parent/guardian to take some time before they leave with the child, for example invite them to sit down for a cup of tea/coffee and talk with a staff member.
2. Offer to contact a family member or friend, or the person(s) listed as the child's emergency contact person on their enrolment form.
3. Offer to call a taxi.

If the parent/guardian rejects the above suggestions and insists on taking the child, the service will follow their Child Safeguarding Procedures by contacting an Garda Síochána where there is a perceived risk to the child for example through negligent driving or the person’s inability to appropriately supervise the child on the way home.



Child Safeguarding Policy

Child Safeguarding Statement

Grovelands Childcare is a registered childcare provider that provides the following services for children aged 12 months to 13 years:

- Full Day Care
- Sessional Day Care
- ECCE Scheme
- CCSP Scheme
- TEC Schemes

The management structure consists of:

- 1. The Director's**
- 2. Senior Management Team**
- 3. The Centre Operation Managers/ DLP's**
- 4. The Centre Supervisors**
- 5. Early Childhood Professionals**
- 6. Chef/ Food & Nutrition**
- 7. Other Support Staff**
- 8. Students/ Volunteers**
- 9. House Keeping**

Grovelands Childcare Commitment to safeguard children from harm

Our service is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop.

Our service believes that the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount. We are committed to child-centred practice in all our work with children.

We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to, and heard. Our policy and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and

Welfare of Children, DCYA, 2017, Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure, Tusla, 2018, and the Children First Act 2015.

Our policy declaration applies to all paid staff, volunteers and students on work placement within our organisation. All staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration and our child safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures.

We will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures annually or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

Grovelands Childcare - Statement of Intent

Grovelands Childcare is committed to creating a safe environment for children, which is free from abuse and where suspicion of abuse is dealt with promptly and appropriately. We will comply with Tusla on Child Protection.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for ensuring that suspected cases of child neglect or abuse are referred promptly to the designated person in Tusla - The Child and Family Agency through the standard reporting procedure. The contact details and job title of the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy are on display in all of our centres.

These usually consist of:

Designated Liaison Person =	Manager/Acting Manager
Deputy Designated Liaison Person =	Supervisor
Report a concern Galway/Roscommon:	091 546235
Report a concern Offaly:	090 6483106
Report a concern Westmeath:	090 6483106

In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of the Child and Family Agency, reports should be made to An Garda Síochána. The Designated Liaison Person should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training considered necessary to keep them updated on new developments.

The Designated Liaison Person may receive reports of suspected child abuse or concerns about a child's safety and welfare. It is their responsibility:

- To ensure that they are fully conversant with the organisation's duties to the protection and welfare of children
- To ensure that they are fully familiar with Grovelands Childcare Child Protection Policy

Grovelands Childcare will ensure that the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person have access to appropriate training to undertake their roles and have regular support and supervision from a suitably qualified person.



Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection in this centre is:

<p>DLP:</p> <p><i>The Centre Manager details are:</i></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact Details: _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Deputy:</p> <p><i>The Centre Supervisors Details are:</i></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact Details: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Risk Assessment

In accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, the Service Provider has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the service or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:

Risk Identified	Policies and/or Procedures in place to Control or Manage the Risk
Having Suitable and qualified staff working with children is key to protecting children from harm	<p>A Recruitment Policy is in Place in line with the Early Years Regulations – the policy is always followed when Recruiting new staff</p> <p>Induction Policy – All new staff are given an Induction of clear information on all aspects of the service including information on the code of Behaviour and the child safeguarding policies and procedures</p> <p>Garda Vetting – new staff cannot commence work until they have satisfactory Garda Vetting</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
An After-School child not Turning up on bus or not at the school collection point	<p>After School Policy</p> <p>Missing Child Policy that includes: In the Event of an After-School child not coming on the bus from School In the Event of an After-School child not at the School for Collections The procedure when a non-authorized person arrives to collect your child Who is authorised to collect your child?</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Correct Supervision of Children in the Toilet Areas of the centre	<p>Potty Training Policy</p> <p>Glass Panel Doors for the protection of staff and children</p> <p>No students or volunteers supervise the toilet areas</p> <p>Children are encouraged to be independent at toilet times</p> <p>Staff Monitor toilet areas</p> <p>Different age groups use different toilet areas</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Correct Supervision in Nappy Changing Areas	<p>Nappy Changing Policy and Procedure</p> <p>New Staff Observed at Nappy Changing times during probation periods</p> <p>Glass panels in the doors for the safety of the child and the staff</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Correct Supervision in the Sleep rooms	<p>Staff are aware of the Safe Sleep Policy</p> <p>Sleep Checks are carried out in accordance with Regulations</p> <p>Children are monitored during sleep and rest periods</p> <p>Glass Panels on doors are provided for the safety of the child and the staff</p> <p>Sleep rooms are on CCTV footage.</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Correct Supervision in the Garden Areas	<p>Staff are aware of the importance of correctly supervising in the outdoor play area</p> <p>Staff are aware of out of sight areas in the garden and these are closely supervised.</p> <p>Outdoor Play Policy</p>

Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Having suitable Students & Volunteers	<p>Induction – Is completed with all students to go through the centres Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Garda Vetting – All students are garda vetted before they commence work experience</p> <p>Code of Behaviour – students must follow the Students code of behaviour while on work experience</p>
Monitor and Review	Students work practice is monitored closely; the Student Supervisor holds regular Student meetings to ensure the code of behaviour is followed.
The use of mobile phones	<p>An Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy is in place – staff and students both must sign off that they are aware of policy</p> <p>A mobile Policy is in place – students and staff must follow and sign off that they are aware of the policy</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Correct Administration of Medication	<p>Administration of Medication policy in place</p> <p>New staff and students are not permitted to administer Medication</p> <p>Witness have to be present so that dosage and correct child according to printed label on container is correct</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually

List of Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

As required by the *Children First Act 2015* and *Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017* the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place

- Procedure to maintain a list of mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015
- A Relevant Person has been appointed
- A Designated Liaison Person and Deputy have been appointed
- Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures are in place
- Confidentiality Policy
- Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees
- Procedure for Managing Child Protection Records
- Recruitment & Student Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Code of Behaviour for Working with Children
- Code of Behaviour Students
- Induction Policy (which includes procedures to inform new staff about the Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policies and procedures)
- All staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – *Introduction to Children First* and relevant staff have attended Always Children First Child Protection Training.
- Staff have access to regular Supervision and Support in line with the service policy.
- Staff Supervision and Training Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Outdoor Play Policy
- Child Protection
- Policy for Managing Outings
- Policy for Managing Accidents and Incidents
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Emergency Closure Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy

Implementation and Review

- We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.
- This Statement will be reviewed every 2 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
- This statement has been published on the service website and is displayed in the service. It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with the service. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

Updated: June 2020
To be Reviewed: June 2021

Signed Service Provider: _____

Date: _____

Service Provider's name and contact details:

Regina Bushell
Grovelands Childcare
Ballymahon Road
Athlone
Co. Westmeath
0872857304

For further information on this Statement, contact Relevant Person:

Deirdre Frampton Bushell 087 2763340



Child Protection Policy

Our aims under Child Protection

Grovelands Childcare will provide a secure and a safe environment for all children. Our policy is underpinned by Children's First, Our Duty to Care and Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

We aim to:

- Ensure that children are never placed in risk while in the care of our staff
- Ensure that Confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Revise staff awareness of child protection issues and procedures frequently
- Ensure managers and Supervisors are up to date with Child Protection training
- Ensure that all members of staff are up to date with the 'Children's First Act'
- Regularly review, update and discuss the Child Protection Policy with staff
- Provide training for all adults involved in Grovelands Childcare to ensure they can recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and/or neglect and can deal with the matter appropriately and according to the Grovelands Childcare Procedure
- Keep to appropriate adult/child ratios and adults will not be left alone for extended periods of time with individual children or small groups
- Ensure the layout of the rooms permits constant supervision of all children
- Take into account all of the children's needs arising from race, culture, language and religion
- Ensure that children's autonomy and independence will be encouraged to help them resist inappropriate approaches and express their feelings confidently
- Ensure that Staff do not use any form of physical intervention – for example, physically holding a child in order to manage their behaviour – unless it is necessary to prevent injury to the child, to another child, or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property. Any such incident is recorded and the parents/carers are informed of the incident on the day by the manager or the designated person in charge.
- Comply with Children's First and the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children

Protecting and Promoting Childs Rights

Grovelands Childcare ensures that staff follow and understand the Grovelands Childcare Code of Behaviour.

Each employee of Grovelands Childcare has a responsibility to protect and promote children's rights by:

- Treating children with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Making time to listen, talk to and get to know each individual child
- Making sure that children know the age appropriate rules for behaviour
- Encouraging Children to have a voice – ensuring they have input into Curriculums and how things are run
- Helping children to feel safe, happy and having as much fun as possible
- Never favouring one child/children over others
- Enabling children to regard their own bodies as their own property

- Encouraging them to express feelings, fears and experiences openly
- Giving written information to support children and their parents
- Knowing and understanding their duty to care as Employees and their responsibility in relation to child protection
- Never engaging in sexually provocative games or make suggestive comments, even in fun
- Respecting children's privacy in bathrooms or changing areas
- Sensitively ensuring that age appropriate children know about the child protection policy
- Always responding to complaints or allegations
- Helping children realise the difference between confidentiality and secrecy
- Never using physical punishment with children or in any way be verbally abusive, nor should they tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of a child.
- Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have additional needs
- Being sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or activities
- Only allowing physical contact as a way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern if it is acceptable to all persons involved
- Encouraging children to report cases of bullying to either a designated person, or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of the manager
- Employees are not recommended to give lifts in their cars to individual young people, especially for long journeys

Excluding known Abusers

Grovelands Childcare tries to the best of their ability to exclude known abusers. In order to achieve this, they do the following:

- Carry out pre-employment interviews
- Request 2 references – one of which from a previous employer. These references are contacted by centre managers and verified.
- Garda Clearance is sought for all staff before they begin employment
- Carry out Police Checks and Disclosures on staff who have lived outside of Ireland for longer than 6 months.
- Employ new staff subject to a probationary period.
- All students on work experience are also requested to complete Garda Clearance and Police checks before attending. Students are also required to submit 2 references before their start date that are verified by the centre supervisor or manager.
- Students are never left unsupervised with any children.
- Outside agencies are requested to show proof of ID and sign in when entering the building and are supervised during visits to the centre.
- Maintenance staff are accompanied around the centre by a member of the staff team
- Practices or the treat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are not carried out on any child while attending the service.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Specific factors during interview which would exclude certain applicants from working with Grovelands Childcare

Grovelands Childcare Responsibility to Report Neglect or Abuse

Grovelands Childcare has a duty to care to each individual child. Staff must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. From 11th December 2017 all Early Years Professionals will be legally obliged to report concerns of Child Harm to Túsła. These persons are known as ‘Mandated Persons’. Mandated Persons must report Child Protection and welfare concerns to Túsła and help Túsła, if requested, in assessing a reported concern.

Reporting Neglect or Abuse

If a concern arises in Grovelands Childcare for an individual child or children attending the service, in the first instance, the matter will be reported to the service’s Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP has responsibility for reporting concerns to the statutory authorities and will have access to necessary information on children attending the service required to make a report (e.g. name, address, date of birth, parents contact details etc).

If you as a parent have a concern you will be required to provide the DLP with a clear and accurate account of the nature of your concern including reasonable grounds for reporting. This might include a factual account of something you observed; a record of a disclosure by a child or young person or information provided to you by a third party. In the event of third-party disclosure, ideally that person would be encouraged to speak directly to the DLP also.

The report should be made without delay. In the event that you are unable to contact the service DLP or the centre were for whatever reason unwilling or unable to make a report, any person can directly report a child abuse or neglect concern to the Child and Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána and should do so without delay. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Child and Family Agency Lo Call Tel. 1850 241850.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending the Child and Family Agency intervention. In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the Child and Family Agency, you should contact the Gardaí. This may be done through any Garda station or by dialling 999 and giving your location.

The Standard Report Form for reporting child welfare and protection concerns to the Child and Family Agency should be used by the DLP’s in the centres. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the Child and Family Agency. Potential risks to unidentifiable children should also be reported to the Child and Family Agency.

Grovelands Childcare will follow good practice to ensure that parents are informed that a report is being made to the Child and Family Agency unless doing so would put the child at further risk.

Before deciding whether or not to make a formal report, the DLP may wish to discuss a concern with a health professional or directly with the Child and Family Agency Children and Family Services (see the Child and Family Agency contacts in Appendix 2). This informal consultation can be done confidentially without identifying the child, family or service involved. However, if advised that the concern warrants a formal report, full details must be given, in order to enable an effective and timely investigation to take place.

Reporting a Child Disclosure

In Grovelands Childcare reporting a child disclosure is done through the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is responsible for receiving and passing on concerns. Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect. If a Child makes a disclosure to a staff member it is the responsibility of the staff member to record accurately the disclosure and report to the centre's DLP (Designated Liaison Person). Tusla, The Child and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the Túsula, The Child and Family Agency.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. the safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
2. reports should be made without delay to the Túsula, The Child and Family Agency

Record Keeping and Storage of Reports or Disclosures

Record keeping is of critical importance in this area of work. The ability to protect children requires accurate records to be maintained. It is essential that all managers keep contemporaneous records of all safeguarding concerns – this will include contacts, consultations and any actions taken. All records relating to child protection and welfare such as records of concerns, allegations or disclosures or reports to statutory authorities should be kept in a safe and confidential manner. Paper records should be stored in locked filing cabinets with restricted access. Records held on PCs, servers or mobile devices should be encrypted and password protected. As regards the retention of records normally child protection reporting records are held until the child reaches the age of 21 years old.

Allegations against a Grovelands Childcare Employee

Should an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct in relation to a child be made against a Grovelands Childcare employee, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The standard reporting procedure as above will be initiated on notification of the allegation, by the Designated Liaison Person. The safety and welfare of the child is the foremost consideration and any necessary protective measures, proportionate to the risk will be taken (e.g. staff member removed from duties that involve contact with the child up to and including possible suspension with pay pending a full investigation). Parents / carers will be kept informed of steps taken as above.
2. A senior manager will be appointed to advise the staff member that an allegation has been made against them and the nature of the allegation. The person will be afforded an opportunity to respond. In relation to abuse of a child or young person, the response will be noted and passed to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency to whom the allegation was reported. Any action taken should be guided by agreed Grovelands Childcare's procedures, the applicable employment contract and the principles of natural justice.
3. The person will be informed that a report will be made to the statutory authorities and that Grovelands Childcare will cooperate fully with any assessment or investigation that ensues. This should be undertaken without delay.

Updated: June 2020

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4. The Designated Liaison Person will liaise closely with investigating bodies (HSE Children and Family Services / An Garda Síochána) to ensure that actions taken by the organisation do not undermine or frustrate any investigations.
5. The individual will require support during this process and this will be provided on a confidential basis through the EAP. 7. Following advice from the statutory authorities an internal investigation under Grovelands Childcare's Disciplinary and Grievance Policies may be undertaken.
6. In keeping with the Grovelands Childcare Code of Standards and Behaviour, should a statutory investigation or criminal proceedings be undertaken against an employee in relation to a child or young person outside the context of an employee's role, this must be reported to HR. The HR Manager will be informed with due regard for privacy and fair procedure of the individual involved.

A copy of the Túsla standard reporting form will follow this page



Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality

Any information shared with the staff of Grovelands Childcare will be treated in the strictest confidence. No child's Records are ever disclosed to any other parties, unless required to do so by law or unless requested by agencies such as Early Intervention Teams or Public Health Nurses with written permission from the parents/carers.

Staff are aware of their duty and responsibility where confidentiality is concerned and any breach of contract in this regard will result in suspension or termination of employment.

Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

Where child protection and welfare concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child. No undertaking regarding secrecy can be given to either adults or children in relation to child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations. Sharing information in reporting child protection or welfare concerns is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection. Grovelands Childcare will cooperate with the Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána on the sharing of information and records where a child welfare or protection issue arises. Relevant staff will attend and share information, as required, at formal child protection and welfare meetings as organised by the child and Family Agency i.e. Child Protection Conferences and Strategy Meetings. Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.

Liaising with Other Bodies

Grovelands Childcare will be required at times to communicate and share information with other bodies such as Early Intervention Teams, Better Start Mentors and Therapists. The manager of Grovelands childcare centre will communicate with parents and ensure they are happy for this information to be shared beforehand.

In relation to Child Protection, Grovelands Childcare has a duty to care to each Individual Child. Any documentation requested by court order or by the Garda will be provided. The directors of Grovelands Childcare will deal with Liaising with Government bodies in relation to this type of Liaising.



Emergency Closure Policy

In the event that Grovelands Childcare centre has to close, temporarily change opening hours or reduce the services that we offer due to inclement weather conditions/staff attendance or other unforeseen circumstances you will be contacted by phone/text/social media and informed of any change in service as soon as it is possible for us to do so.

Emergency Closure during the Day-to-day running of a centre

In the Event of immediate Emergency Closure of Grovelands Childcare due to a Bomb Scare, fire or other unforeseen circumstance which puts the lives of staff and children at risk Grovelands Childcare will bring children and staff to an Emergency Collection Point.

As part of the emergency closure procedure the following **Items must be taken:**

- A fully charged mobile phone
- Portable First Aid kit
- Roll books which will include record of Attendance and the children's next of kin emergency contact information
- Emergency supply bag to include: 4 hypothermia blankets, 1 large pack of nappies, 2 packets of wipes, spare changes of clothes, key of the external garden gate (it is the responsibility of the sunflower staff to bring this bag which is located under the portable cot. Sessional services bag located in office area.)

Emergency Collection Points

IDA, Athlone
Creggan Court Hotel,
Kilmartins Roundabout
N6, Athlone

Corran Riada, Monksland, Athlone
Athlone Springs
Monksland
Athlone

Ballymahon Road, Athlone
Sheraton Hotel
Gleeson Street
Athlone

IDA, Tullamore
Bridge House Hotel
Tullamore

Market Point, Mullingar
Newbury Hotel
Patrick Street
Mullingar

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Emergency Closure due to a Medical Illness Breakout

Staff will contact parents if in a situation where the centre has been requested by Túsla or the HSE for closure due to a breakout of an Infectious Illness.

Senior Management will ensure close contact with parents via phone, text or social media to keep them up to date with the procedures that have to be taken and followed.



Emotional Support and Behavioural Management Policy

Grovelands Childcare believe that children have the right to grow and develop to their full potential in an enriching environment, where they know what is expected of them, they can make choices and accept responsibility for their actions.

At Grovelands Childcare we encourage children to respect themselves, each other, adults and property. We believe that children have the right to expect positive approaches to behaviour through encouraging and praising positive behaviour. Behaviour issues will always be managed in a positive way that supports children's confidence and self-esteem. Corporal punishment of any kind or practices that are deemed disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are prohibited to be carried out in respect of any child attending Grovelands Childcare.

Within the childcare service, Staff, Parents/Guardians are prohibited from:

Physical punishment of any kind

Practices which humiliate, frighten or attack a child's sense of self

Shouting, criticism and comparison. Shouting conveys a loss of control

Labelling a child as bold, bad or naughty, rather than the behaviour

Excluding or leaving a child unsupervised

Aims:

The learning environments both indoor and outdoor are planned to ensure a positive impact on children's behaviour in terms of space, access and choice of activities.

Staff take a consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour in ways appropriate to children's age and level of understanding. Staff encourage positive behaviour in all interactions with children.

Children learn how to behave in a positive way and to respect others, and their environment. Behaviour problems that persist, or cause concern, is managed to achieve the most positive outcome for the child.

How children's positive social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing is supported and promoted

- The Grovelands Childcare curriculum is designed with the age and developmental stage of the child in mind. Staff will promote and support children's positive social, emotional and behavioural well-being.
- Observations are regularly completed so staff can work with individual children on areas of development that may require attention.
- Each child will be assigned a key worker who will be responsible for building up a special relationship with them and their family. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations they find difficult. The key worker can support the child and the parent throughout their stages of development.
- Staff will be the role model of positive behaviour and how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role. Staff are encouraged to let the children lead activities and to step in to help with communications and problem solving if its required. Role modelling includes: Explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, getting down to the child's eye level
- Staff will always comfort and support an upset child.

- Play activities will be used to play out challenging situation so children get the opportunity to practice positive behaviour strategies.
- Books and storytelling are used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated.
- A range of activities will be available to the group of children which offer a lot of choice to all in order to keep the children active in play.
- Children will have ample time to explore outdoors giving them lots of opportunity to run and feel free.
- The children will come up with a list of rules they think are important helping them take ownership of their behaviour according to their understanding and stage of development. These rules will also try to promote positive behaviours. Any rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate.
- The environments both indoor and outdoor will be laid out into specific play spaces which supports children's natural curiosity encouraging them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.
- Children will be given a sense of ownership in the rooms. They will be given a range of age appropriate daily responsibilities to encourage care and respect for their environment.
- Positive behaviour is praised and celebrated by the staff.

Children are supported in preventing, managing and resolving conflict

We aim to encourage self-discipline and consideration for others by giving children the tools and language they require to communicate appropriately to their peers. By praising and supporting children and acknowledging their positive actions and attitudes we hope to ensure that they see that we value and respect them. The methods used in the centre will only be those, which promote the development of self-discipline and will always be developmentally appropriate. They will be reflected throughout the age groups.

Behavioural Management Policies are displayed in rooms to ensure staff follow the correct procedure at all times. These are situated in the room documentation flip folders on the wall.

Guidance for conflict management and resolving an incident

Approach the situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.

Remain neutral rather than taking sides.

Focus on the behaviour, rather than the child.

Acknowledge the children's feelings with open statements, e.g. 'You seem upset...' and ask them if they agree with the observation and if so, do they want to talk about it? Start the negotiations with them by reflecting back their behaviour and involving them in checking out the details.

Restate the problem, e.g. 'so you both want to play with the train at the same time ...'

Ask for ideas for solutions and decide on them together, e.g. 'What can we do to solve this problem?' Encourage the children to think of a solution and check to make sure that the solution is acceptable to the children involved and realistically achievable. Clarify all the feelings with the children involved so that you are aware of anything that remains unresolved for them.

If a child uses positive problem-solving behaviour, reinforce this, for example by saying 'You solved the problem...' then state what they did.

Stay near the child/children so that you are prepared to give follow up support and clarification.

Follow through with your decisions but be prepared to change them if they prove inappropriate for the individual needs of the child/children.

Explain the reasons behind why something cannot happen or why some behaviour is inappropriate.

Losing control

When a child becomes so angry, anxious or frustrated to the extent that they themselves and others have been unsettled, it is important that staff remain calm and settle the situation for this child and the others around.

Staff will stop a child's aggressive or destructive behaviour such as biting, kicking or hitting and give a reason for their action such as 'biting must stop, biting hurts'.

Staff model positive behaviour to the child and will never mirror the child's behaviour by raising their tone of voice or acting inappropriately.

When the situation has been diffused, it is important that staff offer support, time and further discussion with the child, to reflect on what happened and to plan an alternative coping strategy in case a similar issue arises again.

A positive approach that the child may use in the future is reinforced such as walking away and playing elsewhere or by stating clearly that they don't like what is happening and/or it hurts.

Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm

Physical holding as prevention must only be used:

To prevent an accident such as a child running across a road.

To prevent injury, e.g. if a child is having a temper tantrum.

No matter what age the child is, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time. 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.

Where a child is expressing feelings of anger, anxiety or frustration, in a way which is unsafe for themselves and others and where reasoning has not stopped the behaviour, a staff member may assist the child in re-establishing control by holding them, to contain their feelings safely, as a last resort and for the minimum length of time. This intervention will only be used in an age appropriate way, e.g. it may be appropriate to pick a very young child up. Great care will be taken when holding a child with particular attention paid to their individual needs.

The intent of this action is to keep the child and others safe until their self-control is regained and they feel contained, but it will only be used in exceptional and rare circumstances.

A calm and caring attitude on the part of the adult is critical in ensuring that this is supportive and in no way a punishment.

Note: Staff giving comfort by holding a child when they are distressed is not physical restraint. This should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.

Time to one side with support of an adult

In some very 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. This may follow an incident in which the child may have felt very angry, anxious or frustrated to the extent that they themselves and others have been unsettled.

Adult support is needed throughout this time and the child can decide when they feel able to continue to participate in the activities.

A child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support.

The use of the 'naughty step' or similar is never used as this can lead to feelings of isolation and stigmatisation of the child.

Outdoor time will never be taken away as a form of punishment.

Prohibited practices

It is important to note the following:

Children are never ignored, spoken to sarcastically, humiliated, segregated, or have food withheld.

Corporal punishment - Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.

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

Serious Behaviour Issues

Serious behaviour issues may include:

Any repeated pattern of behaviour that interferes with the child's learning or engagement in social interactions with peers and adults such as withdrawal

Behaviours that are not responsive to the guidance procedures/approaches described above
Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour (e.g. screaming, property destruction, self-injury, persistent non-compliance).

When a child's serious behaviour issues are causing disruption and problems for the other children in the group, the following approaches will be considered:

Reviewing the programme to ensure that it is meeting the child's care, learning and development needs

Reviewing the service's approaches to addressing the child's behaviour

Discussing with the child's parents/guardians to help to develop a specific plan for that child.

The purpose of the plan will be to help ensure that the reason the child is having difficulty with regulating their behaviour, is identified if possible and addressed. It is also to provide whatever support they need to be able to relate well to other children and adults, make friends, feel secure and valued, explore and learn confidently and feel good about themselves.

An individualised plan that takes a positive, learning approach, will be developed. This plan may include:

- Observing and recording the behaviour
- Identifying the triggers for the challenging behaviour (best guesses about why and when the behaviour happens)
- Considering ways to make the events/interactions that the child seems to find difficult, easier to manage (e.g. less difficult, less confusing, more engaging)
- Skills to teach the child to be able to deal with the situation without resorting to the problem behaviour
- Ways in which the adults will respond when the problem behaviour occurs - to ensure a consistent response
- Ways that parents can help the child at home
- Ways to review and evaluate the plan.

Recurring problems are dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child's parents/guardians and, where necessary, other appropriate adults (with

parents'/guardians' consent). Discussing a child's behaviour with staff or parents/guardians in front of the child or other children is to be avoided. Parents/guardians are encouraged to maintain on-going communication with staff on the approaches being implemented.

When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing the difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice, such as engaging with AIM, early intervention teams, a psychologist or play therapist. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.

In partnership with parents, any programme designed for a child by an appropriately qualified specialist will be fully implemented as far as the resources of the service allow.

In exceptional circumstances and following specialised advice and guidance, it may be considered necessary for the child to leave the service to move to a service that can better meet their particular needs.

Recording Practice

Staff record detailed observations frequently when incidents of challenging behaviour occur in order to support the child and have detailed records if necessary, for professionals. The observations will focus on capturing the child's behaviour as a whole, including positive behaviours and achievements as well as what is happening in the lead up to, during and after behaviour incidents.

All serious incidents (especially where another child is involved) are recorded as an incident on the First Steps databases

Records are kept of significant incidents to include:

- The child's name
- Time and location of the incident
- Events leading up to the incident
- The nature of the incident
- Others involved
- Witnesses
- How the situation was handled
- Whether restraint was used, what form of restraint and the reason for it
- Consequences
- Parents/guardians signature/s.

Using names of individual children is avoided particularly when sharing information about incidents with parents.

Behaviour incidents are also recorded and parents are asked to sign and read.

Challenging Behaviour in relation to an Additional Need

In relation to behaviour reflecting an Additional Need, Management will do all they can to ensure to meet the needs of all children and staff in the room. If a child's behaviour is endangering the health and safety of other children or staff or is such that it makes the day difficult for staff and children to function in a normal way, the parent may be asked to remove the child until assessments or additional supports can be provided to the child in our environment.

Separation Anxiety

Children with Separation Anxiety can panic and cry when a parent leaves, even if it is only to go into an adjacent room. This is normal for infants from about 8 months of age but is most intense between 10 and 18 months of age, usually resolving by 2 years of age. The degree of child separation anxiety can depend partly on the child: parent relationship and the age of the child. Separation Anxiety occurs at a time when infants start to become aware that their parents are unique individuals. Teary and tantrum filled goodbyes are a common part of a Child's Early years. Though separation anxiety is a perfectly normal part of childhood development it can be upsetting for not only the child but also the parents involved. Understanding what your child is going through and having a few coping strategies can help both of you get through it. Please discuss any concerns with management.

Potty Training

The staff at Grovelands Childcare are more than happy to assist with Potty Training/Toilet Training provided that it is the right time for both you and your child. In Grovelands Childcare Centres we take a very relaxed attitude towards Toilet Training. We believe that children will only successfully train when they are ready to do so. Parents are requested to begin the process at home (on holidays or at the weekend) and the staff will continue when they return. Child must be fully potty trained before commencing the ECCE scheme.

Some signs that indicate if a child is ready to be trained are:

- Appropriate Language to indicate the need to use potty/toilet (or a picture in situations where verbal communication is challenged)
- Staying dry for long periods of time
- Indicating what they have done in the nappy
- The ability to dress/undress
- An interest in staying dry/ potty training

The centre manager can print out a potty-training Pack to guide parents through the process and inform them on what to expect. These also include a sticker reward chart so that the child will have the same chart in both environments. Please speak with the manager of the centre if you require a Potty-Training Pack. It is important for parents to provide lots of changes of clothes during this time and we suggest 'big boys and girls pants' rather than pull ups as the children recognise wet and dry sensations instead of the same sensations as a nappy.

If staff feel toilet training is causing upset or that the child is not responding well, they will speak to you as parents regarding this. It may require leaving the training to a later stage when the child is more ready and prepared.

Making Goodbyes Easier

These strategies can help ease the emotional stress of goodbyes:

- Timing is Everything – Ensure you have time allocated to drop off your child. Rushing in the mornings can sometimes create a feeling of panic and worry in the child
- Practice – Talk to your child and practice waving goodbye to one another. Separate for very short periods whilst in the home environment
- The manager will support you and encourage a settling in period with your child when they are starting in the centre.
- Staff will communicate regularly with parents and advise parents where required

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- Parents should stay calm and be consistent when handing over the child
- Parents should communicate verbally to reassure child that they will be ok
- It is important to collect children if you have promised to. We advise that parents don't say that they will collect child early if they are unable to do so.

Biting

Grovelands childcare recognises that biting is unfortunate, but not unexpected with toddlers are in a group situation. An incident of biting is very upsetting for everyone involved.

Toddlers bit for many reasons, some of which include:

- Developing issues
- Teething
- Frustrations
- A change in home environment
- Over stimulation
- Under stimulation
- Excitement
- Anger
- Lack of Language
- Lack of Communication Skills
- Jealous
- Over Tired
- Or to simply see what happens

Biting is carried out on impulse and often without any outward signs to indicate what's about to happen. Staff observe the specific reasons or triggers that might lead to a biting incident and if required a care plan is put in place.

Staff reinforce good behaviours with children who bite and encourage and give them the language they need.

Procedure for dealing with biting

All staff are aware of the following procedure in regards to a child that is biting:

The child's key worker or another member of staff will be appointed responsibility for the child that is biting including the busier times during the day such as nappy changing, transitioning from one activity to another or at home & arrival times.

Supervision is important and staff must always face towards the children
Children are never left unattended.

Child who is biting is considered to be "Shadowed", this involves the child being supervised at all times during this stage of development.

If an incident of biting occurs, the staff will first assess the injured child

Staff member will get down to the eye level of the child that has bitten and will say in a firm, calm but low voice "Biting Hurts".

If required child will be removed from the area to calm down, but will not be left unsupervised.

Staff will encourage the child to acknowledge the child that was injured and will praise them for any gestures of apology.

During the remainder of the day child will be praised for good behaviour and will not be reminded of earlier incident.

Parents will be contacted and forms will be required to be signed on collections.

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Managers will work closely with staff in the areas to ensure support is given to staff, children and parents.

At no stage will a child be shouted at or mishandled. They will be treated with respect at all times as it is the behaviour that is wrong and not the child.

Concern Sheets

Concern sheets may be used by managers during meetings with parents if a behaviour is on-going. During this meeting the manager will take a record of the concern displayed by the staff or by the parent. An “Action Plan” will then be drawn up working in partnership together and the manager will organise a review date to meet with the parent. Goals may also be set out for staff and parents to follow to help with on-going behaviours.

Dealing with Discriminatory Incidents

The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.

All children need to know that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable. Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.

When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident.

Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so be careful not to make assumptions.

Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the setting. Recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child’s parents or guardians.

An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.

By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings. It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. Be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service.

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow the Grovelands Childcare Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

Equal Opportunities

It is the intent Of Grovelands Childcare to respect the individuality of all children and adults involved in our service and to promote positive attitudes to differences of culture, race, gender, language and economic circumstances.

Copy of our concern sheet and a Copy of our Action Plan will follow this page

Copy of a Child Concern sheet will follow this page



Concern/ Complaint Sheet

Date: _____

Time: _____

Parent/ Person: _____

Reported Concern/ Complaint:

What Action will now be taken:

Signed: _____ (Management)

Plan of Action



Child's Name: _____

Age: _____ Room: _____ Key Worker: _____

Aim of Plan:

Plan for Mum/ Dad:

Plan for Key Worker:

Review Date:

Signed: _____

Parent

Key Worker

Result



Name of staff member making concern: _____

Child Concern Sheet

Date: _____

Name of child: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Gender: _____

Child's 1st Language: _____

Length of time in service: _____

Type of Concern:

- Personal, Social & Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language Development
- Early Mathematical Development
- Early Literacy Development
- Expressive Arts and Design Development
- Understanding of the world
- Other

Brief Description of Concern:

Next Steps (Please circle)

Narrative Observation	Development Check	Assessment
Meeting with Parent	AIM Application/ Assessment of Need	Action Plan
Research	Picture Routine	Change of Room/Area
Addition to an area	Reward Chart	Other

Please explain above in more detail:

Concern reported to: _____

Date: _____

Signed staff member making concern: _____

Signed Manager: _____

Date: _____

Review:

Review Date: _____

Next Steps Description: _____

Signed staff member: _____ Date: _____

Signed Manager: _____ Date: _____



Fire Safety Policy

Fire Safety

All rooms have the Fire Evacuation Procedure on display along with a copy of the plan of the premises to show the procedures for evacuating when an alarm is heard.

Fire exits are clearly identifiable. Parents need to be aware of the exit doors around the building.

Designated Meeting points are located in the back garden of the premises, that can easily be accessed around the sides of the building if required.

Staff are:

- Trained in the use of Fire Safety Equipment
- Aware and trained in the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire
- Familiar with the location of the Fire Fighting Equipment
- Aware of the Emergency numbers to be called in the event of a Fire
- Updated every 2 years of Fire Safety

All of the children who are old enough are educated about fire, fire safety and the evacuation procedures and are supported to regularly practice how to evacuate calmly and safely from the building.

Frequency and Timing of Fire Drills

Monthly Fire Drill practices will occur in Grovelands Childcare to help prepare the staff and the children in the event of a fire on the premises. These drills are essential and are always carried out in a calm matter.

These drills will be un-announced and will be the responsibility of the Centre Fire Officer. The Fire drills will take place on different days and hours each month.

Record Keeping of Fire Drills

All Fire Drills are recorded and records are kept for 5 years after they have been created. These records are available at reception in the centre. Fire Safety Officer, managers, designated persons in charge, Túsla Inspectors and the Fire Inspection Officer have access to these records.

The Fire Records in the centre include the following information:

- The type of drill that takes place (planned or unplanned)
- The time and date of the drill
- The number of children in each room during the Fire Drill
- If Emergency Roll books that include contact details of parents were up to date and correct on the day of the drill
- The time it took for each group to get to the designated Meeting Point

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- Any obstacles that may have caused construction during the Fire Drills
- Any other person in the building at the time other than staff and children.

The Fire Officer from an outside agency records the number, type and maintenance of the Fire Safety Equipment. This is also on file at reception.

Fire Doors

We at Grovelands Childcare in the interest of health and safety encourage all parents, visitors and staff members to be vigilant when entering and exiting a room.

We have fire doors in place in some areas around the building as legally obliged to do. These doors are heavy and care will need to be taken when closing doors. The glass panels in our doors allows you to view the area when you are opening a door. This is to prevent hurting a child when entering a room.

Fire Safety Equipment

Appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and fire extinguishers) are in place and we ensure that they are properly maintained and in proper working order. Records are kept of monitoring and maintenance of all fire detection and control equipment. Records are also kept of all fire drills as well as all monitoring and reviews carried out. These records are available at the reception of each centre.

Centre Fire Officer

The staff member responsible in this centre for recording Fire Drills and ensuring The awareness of Staff and children regarding Fire Safety is:

Copy of the Evacuation Procedure will follow this page.

Copy of the centre Fire Certificate will follow this page.

Staff Fire Evacuation Procedure

1

On hearing the Fire Alarm raised, all staff members should immediately start evacuating children

2

Children should not be alarmed and should be encouraged to walk Quickly but Calmly out the nearest emergency exit and gather in the designated garden areas

3

Ensure 1 person takes charge of leading the children out to the designated areas making sure they have the roll book and record forms for their particular area with them

4

Toddlers would be encouraged to hold hands in groups of two, to help evacuate quicker. This can be practised daily when going out to the garden.

5

Bathrooms also to be checked for children by another designated person.

6

Sleep rooms to be evacuated also. In practice drills, children may be left in sleep rooms but staff must enter rooms for practice and timing purposes

7

When at the designated areas, a roll call should be taken of each group.

8

Once all your children are safe & accounted for, other areas may need help, but always ensure the safety of the children in your care first.

9

If in any event, that staff or children cannot return inside the premises, the Emergency Closure Procedure must be followed.

Child Evacuation Procedure



Listen to alarm



Stay Calm



Go to the Exit Door



Stay in your line



Go to the Green Sign in the Garden



Grievance and Management of Complaints Policy

Grovelands Childcare is committed to providing a quality service to children and their parents/guardians and we regularly evaluate our services in order to ensure this and to monitor the standard of our performance.

We welcome all comments on our services, positive or negative. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

Grovelands Childcare gives a commitment to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, sensitively and appropriately to ensure that the standard of service provided by Grovelands Childcare is maintained at a high level. The quality of the service provided to any child and family will never be adversely affected because a complaint has been made.

The complaints procedure is kept as simple as possible. Anyone making a complaint will be supported through the process as needed and given a copy of the 'Complaints Policy and Procedures'. The complaints policy and procedures are displayed in the parent's area of each of our centres.

When a complaint is received the manager will be informed immediately. Every effort will be made to address the issue informally before moving to a formal procedure.

Where a complaint concerns a member of staff, we will address the situation with due regard to our obligations as an employer and the rights of the employees, the terms governing their conditions of employment and the procedures outlined in the staff handbook.

If a complaint is made against the Manager, a representative of the senior management team will conduct an investigation and ensure appropriate management and recording of the complaint.

All complaints made – both formal and informal – will be recorded in detail. Records will be stored in the Complaints Records File and will be retained for at least two years following resolution of the complaint as required by regulation.

All information relating to any complaint will be treated as confidential and shared only on a need to know basis. In the case of a Child Protection concern the Child Protection Policy will apply. All records of complaints will be kept in full compliance with the **Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016**, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2014. The Complaints Records File will be available to those authorised to inspect it, including the Tusla Early Years Inspector.

The evaluation of the outcome of the complaint will form part of the considerations for future policy and practice and risk management procedures.

Procedures & Practices

How to make a complaint

A complaint can come to the attention of the service in a number of different ways:

1. Contact, by phone or in person, with a staff member or by letter, email, and/or text.
2. The complaint may be made by the person directly affected or by a person acting on their behalf.

To whom a complaint can be made

If a person has a complaint about some aspect of the service's activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the individual concerned and/or management

Some complaints may fall more into the category of disagreements or differences of opinion, and may be resolved through discussion and compromise on the part of both the person making the complaint and the staff member concerned.

How a complaint will be managed

Stage One: Informal Process

In the first instance, those who wish to make a complaint are encouraged to speak directly to the relevant member of staff. If they do not want to do this, they can speak with the centre manager who will try to resolve the problem.

The details of the complaint and the response will be recorded by management.

If the manager has a direct or indirect involvement in the matter being complained of, the complaint will be passed to a member of the senior management

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage Two of the procedure will formally come into operation.

Stage Two: Formal Process

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, those making the complaint should be encouraged to put their complaint in writing to senior management the form attached to this policy. All necessary support will be provided. Relevant names, dates and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

Grovelands Childcare will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing as soon as possible – usually within 5 working days – and fully investigate the matter within 10 working days. If there is any delay, those who made the complaint will be advised of this and offered an explanation. Senior Management be responsible for sending them a full and formal written response to their complaint.

The management team, with the assistance of appropriate staff members, will carry out a full investigation. This may involve:

- Interviews with all relevant individuals
- Minute taking of all meetings
- Individuals being informed that they may have an appropriate individual present with them during the investigation.

Where no grounds for the complaint are found, the person making the complaint will be notified and information detailing the next stage will be provided.

Where management investigating, finds grounds for the complaint, they will ensure that all of the required details are available from the person making the complaint.

Staff members must participate and support the investigation of any complaint, where requested. Any staff member involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.

Any complaints not within the scope of the service to investigate, will be referred appropriately. For example:

- If management has good reason to believe that the situation has Child Protection implications, they as the designated Child Protection Officer will ensure that the local Túsła Duty Social Worker is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection Policy.
- If any person involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, they should contact An Garda Síochána.
- Where a complaint relates to Health and Safety it may be appropriate to notify the Health and Safety Authority.

Communication of the Response/Outcome

The formal response to the complaint will be sent from Grovelands Childcare to the person who made the complaint and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint and any necessary amendments to the service's policies and/or procedures and/or risk management procedures, arising from the investigation.

The person making the complaint will be notified of the progress of an investigation on an ongoing and regular basis by the manager in writing, by email or letter including the outcome of the complaint once completed.

Stage 3: Review

If, at the conclusion of the above process, those who made a complaint are dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with the service's response will be passed to the *company directors* who will ensure that there is a complete review of the complaint. This review will be undertaken by a person not previously involved.

Recording of Complaints and Confidentiality

Records of complaints must be kept in the Complaints Records File, separate from children's files. All information relating to complaints is to be shared only on a need-to-know basis. These records are kept for 2 years from the date of the complaint.

Role of Tusla

If a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the service's response or feels for any reason that they cannot bring the concern directly to the manager/registered provider, they can contact Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate.

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate does not investigate individual concerns or complaints. All information received is assessed to determine if any concerns relating to the health and welfare of children exists within the remit of the 2016 Regulations. The information determines the focus and timing of Tusla's inspections.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

Where Tusla Early Years Inspectorate considers that there is a potential risk to the health, safety and welfare of children in an Early Years Service, Tusla Early Years Inspectorate will take appropriate actions with the service provider to ensure that the risk is addressed.

To contact Tusla regarding a concern about this or any early years' service you can contact in the following ways:

Email: early.yearsui@tusla.ie

Call: 061 461700

Or download a complaints form at:

www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/concerned-about-the-operation-of-a-eyes/

Send it to: Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Unsolicited Information Office, 2nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.

The Tusla form can also be posted on request.

A copy of the Grovelands Childcare Complaints form will follow this page



Complaint Form

Name of person making complaint: _____

Address of person making complaint: _____

Phone number: _____

Preferred method of communication: _____

Date and time complaint was made: _____

Date and time of incident (if applicable): _____

Name of person to whom complaint was first made: _____

Name of Registered Provider: Grovelands Childcare – Directors: Regina, Ronan & Deirdre Bushell

Details of Complaint

Signature of Complainant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of manager receiving complaint: _____

Date: _____



Curriculum and Programme Policy

The Type of Curriculum

Grovelands Childcare works off a play-based child led emerging curriculum that is developed through the children's own achievements and emerging interests in conjunction with Aistear and Siolta. Grovelands Childcare recognises that the establishment of daily routines is essential for all young children in our care. We strive to provide a programme of activities which encourage the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, creative and linguistic development of all the children who attend our service.

Aistear

Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland; it was published towards the end of 2009. It provides information for staff to help them plan for, and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners, within loving relationships with others. Aistear describes the types of learning that are important for children in their early years, and offers ideas and suggestions as to how this learning may be nurtured.

Siolta

Siolta is the national quality framework designed for use within all services working with children aged 0-6 years. It outlines standards of quality practice which services should aspire to. Siolta was devised by the former Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) and formally launched in 2006; it reflects and recognises Irish practice. Siolta is not designed to make all services the same, but rather to establish quality standards which can be achieved in many ways and through many types of curriculum.

Learning Boards

Learning Boards are displayed in each of our Educational rooms as a source of visualising the children's learning. It is the responsibility of parents to view these Educational Boards. Staff encourage participation of parents in the curriculum and welcome any suggestions or ideas. The Educational Boards have divided the Curriculum into a Long, Medium and short-term plan. They also include Emerging Interests of the children and mind maps to show that the children have a voice and that the Curriculum is being Child led. Photo Evidence of the previous week is also displayed on Educational Boards for the parents to view.

Monthly Centre Newsletters

Monthly Centre Newsletters are displayed outside each room. These Newsletters can be copied if requested for parents. Please ask a member of staff if you would like a copy of them. They communicate to parents the upcoming events taking place in the centre and what the plan is for the centre in the month ahead. Newsletters also inform parents of any holidays coming up.

Religious Festivals & Cultural Celebrations

Religious Festivals and Cultural Celebrations are all part of our curriculum here in Grovelands Childcare. It is important that children understand that we are all individuals and making festivals fun for the children encourages them to learn through play about these cultural celebrations.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

The staff at Grovelands Childcare respects the religious and cultural diversity of all parents and children who use our service. We would also encourage parents to share recipes, dress codes, candle ceremony's etc for Special occasions.

However, any parent who does not wish that their child should be included in any such festivals should inform the manager.

As a sign of appreciation, we encourage the children at dinner times to say the following short poem before their meal:

“Thank you for the lovely dinner
Thank you, friends, for being my friends
Thank you, family, for being my family
Thank you for everything
The End!”

Fund Raising

It is important that children realise that there are children in the world that are less fortunate and do not have the same opportunities as themselves. Staff explain this age appropriately at a level the children will understand during group times. Grovelands Childcare supports many local, National & Global Charities.

From time to time children may be asked to get sponsorship or raise monies for these worthy causes. The children and their families learn and gain experience from their active family involvement.

Other requests by parents may be considered. The directors must approve any requests for the use of Grovelands Childcare centres for fund raising. Staff are not permitted to canvas parents for sponsorship and are requested to seek permission from managers to canvas other co-workers.

Parents will be informed of upcoming events or activities through newsletters, notice boards or on social media. Parents have a right to not be involved with any of the above activities and should inform the centre manager of their decision as soon as such events are advertised.

Drama and Acting

Pre-school children will take part in shows or concerts in local schools or theatres throughout the year. Parents will be requested to sign permissions for children to travel for rehearsals and also for their child to take part in such events.

Grovelands Childcare does not take responsibility for any photos or videos taken during these events and parents have a right to ask that their child is not included if requested.

A fee will be charged for travel expenses, donations to a charity, costumes for the event or donations towards a venue.

Community Involvement

Community involvement in an early years' service can take many forms, from proactively seeking the resources, amenities and opportunities available in the community, such as local sports clubs, the local library, local park/green area and shops, to establishing networks and working relationships with other organisations, for example, health services, your County Childcare Committee or early years networks.

One of the key elements of community involvement is the importance of making connections with voluntary and statutory organisations. This takes the form of professional links with

national and regional organisations and, more importantly, local community ones. It is important for early years services to establish themselves as being part of that community. For many families, the early childhood setting may be their first contact with the wider community beyond their home. It is, therefore, often a resource for families to learn more about their community and make other connections. A sense of community plays an important role in the development of children's awareness of their identity and feelings of belonging.

If the early years' service can demonstrate clear connections with the community in a meaningful way, this can promote a child's sense of belonging to that community and help shape their responsibility to it.

Community involvement can be a challenge as establishing links takes time and conscious effort. We encourage any help and support from parents in helping us to make further community connections.

From time to time we will ask members of the community to visit the children in the centre to discuss topics such as hair dressing, dental and oral hygiene, the guide dogs, the garda and the local ambulance & fire services. These are great opportunities for children to become familiar with members of the community and also to build up relationships. A staff member will accompany the member of the community at all times when they are on the premises for the safety of them and the children.

Parental/Grandparents Involvement

Parents and Grandparents are encouraged to come in and share their skills with the children. Children love to see members of their family and introduce them to all their friends. Parents and Grandparents can get involved in our curriculum in many ways such as:

- Helping with Fund Raisers
- Going on Outings
- Volunteering to come in and speak about their occupation
- Coming in and playing music for circle time if musically talented
- Talking to after school children or pre-school in regard to history
- Coming in for a planned art activity if artistically inclined

Please let the manager know if you as a parent have any skills that you could share with the centre.

It is important that managers and staff build good relationships with parents. Good communication is key to building good relationships. Staff can work with children and introduce themes in the rooms such as 'A New Baby' if there are going to be any changes at home to help you prepare your child for these changes. Parents can speak in confidence to management regarding changes in the child's home environment and support will be given where possible. Parents should note that changes such a moving house, a new baby, a break up of relationships or a death can affect children's behaviour.

Centres also have a list of Support Services available locally for parents if they require any support or guidance.

Journey & Aistear Books

Grovelands Childcare will try to record your child's journey throughout the years they spend with us. This may be done through photos or records that we will try put together for parents in a journey scrap book.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

Aistear Books will be done with the pre-school children the year before they attend Primary School. These books will describe the learning journeys the child took to pre-prepare for this next transition to Primary School.

Parents please note that a charge will apply for these books to cover the costs of printing and time. Parents will be notified of the cost of these books. The books are an optional extra and parents are not obliged to purchase should they choose not to.



Outings Policy

Outings

Grovelands Childcare organise day trips throughout the year. These outings enhance and reinforce in a practical and visual way, the knowledge that your child is acquiring while within our care.

To make our outings pleasant and enjoyable we ensure the following:

- A risk assessment including transportation management and roll calls will be carried out before any outing is developed.
- Ratios will be adhered to as set out by our insurance company.
- First aid equipment and a qualified member of staff will be present at all times.
- Mobile phones are taken for use in emergency.
- Buses with seatbelts will always be hired and staff will ensure children are correctly seated.
- Parents are welcome to accompany us on outings.
- Children will wear high visibility jackets.
- Parent contact details will be taken. Staff will adhere to 'the missing child Policy' in the event that a child goes missing on an outing.

The parents in advance of any trip must sign a consent form and return it to the centre prior to the outing. There will be additional costs for these trips, which parents will be informed of prior to the trip. Parents will be informed of the destination, method of travel, times of departure and expected return times. At least one certified staff member qualified in First Aid will travel on all outings and a first aid box will be taken on the trip.

Parents and guardians can decline any offer for their children to be involved in any planned outings. If this happens, alternative arrangements are made for their child. Children who do not have parent or guardian consent to go on an outing will be supported to make sure they do not feel excluded.

Consent

Parents or guardians must have given written authorisation for their child to be involved in an outing with full knowledge of the date, proposed destination and method of transport, planned activities and number of staff members and other adults accompanying/supervising children.

- The consent form must include:
 - The child's name
 - The reason for the outing
 - The date and the expected time of departure and return
 - A description of the proposed destination
 - The method of transport that will be used
 - The proposed activities
 - The anticipated number of children likely to be going on the outing
 - The adult: child ratio on the outing

- Any adults other than staff members who will accompany and supervise the children on the outing
- Information about the risk assessment that has been carried out and is available at the service.

Parents or guardians must also be notified in advance about what type of clothing will be suitable for their child to wear, and also whether they will need to provide items such as spare clothing, sunscreen, a packed lunch and drinks.

Supervision of children

A group photograph is to be taken before leaving the service to check against if required.

This is to provide the most recent picture of the children and their clothes.

Name tags must be placed on the children before leaving the service and only removed when children return to the service.

The children must, at all times, be appropriately supervised to ensure no child gets lost and that there is no unauthorized access to children. Prior to any outing, staff members should decide who will help to search, how the search will be carried out and who will take charge of the rest of the group of children should a child go missing.

It is essential to call or mark names in a roll call, with a name-to-face check rather than count heads. To ensure that all children are accounted for, this procedure should be followed:

- On leaving the service
- On arrival at the destination
- At regular intervals while at the destination
- When moving from area to area – including going indoors or outdoors
- Leaving the destination
- On return to the service.

Accidents, incidents or injuries

If there is an accident involving a child, a member of staff, or an accompanying adult or a child goes missing on the outing or is left behind, the staff member in charge of the outing must make sure that:

- The registered provider or service manager is contacted immediately.
- The previously agreed search procedure is followed if necessary.
- The pre-assigned members of staff take the other children back to the service.
- The member of staff with up to date First Aid training administers First Aid if necessary.
- They take charge of all necessary communications with emergency services and with the parents/guardians of the child/children concerned.



Code of Conduct for Parents/ Guardians who volunteer to go on an Outing

Thank you for volunteering to assist during one of our outings at Grovelands Childcare. We value the contribution you can make to the children's learning.

This Code of Conduct sets out the guidelines that we expect all our volunteers to follow. Please read through them carefully before signing at the end to say you understand and agree to abide by the Code, then return the signed copy to the manager for our records.

Volunteers who feel they cannot fully abide by the guidelines within this Code should withdraw their offer of help.

Supervision

You should be supervised by a member of staff at all times when on the outing.

- Ensure you are never alone with any of the children apart from your own child.
- You should follow the guidance and instructions given by designated person in charge on the outing
- At all times you should maintain a 'professional' relationship with all the children (including your own child) and staff. This will minimise the risk of any allegations of inappropriate behaviour.
- During outings when public toilets or changing areas may need to be used, you should exercise caution and avoid placing yourself in a position where your actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Male volunteers should use a cubicle in public toilets.
- If a child tells you something or you see something that concerns during the outing, this should be reported to the designated person in charge immediately. If you feel what has been disclosed and/or witnessed is of a safeguarding nature which may be putting a child's welfare at risk, then this should be reported to the centre manager. Remember that you must not try to investigate the matter any further yourself, for example by asking the child questions, and that you should never promise to keep any disclosure by a child a secret.
- Behaviour management of the children is the responsibility of members of childcare staff and should not involve volunteer helpers. If you are helping out with children who are misbehaving, please inform the designated person in charge. Never try to reprimand or allocate consequences yourself.
- You should act appropriately towards all children, parents, carers, staff and other volunteers, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. If you witness or experience bullying, harassment or discrimination, no matter who is the victim or perpetrator, you should raise this with the centre manager
- If you have any concerns about following this guidance or are aware of any incidents that occur that may be misconstrued or give rise to concern, please talk to the centre manager

Setting an example

All volunteer helpers during our outings should be positive role models to the children, so we expect you to:

- Dress appropriately
- Talk politely and calmly to all children including your own. Avoid sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments.
- Never use inappropriate, offensive or abusive language whilst on the premises or during the outing
- Never smoke during an outing
- Offer encouragement and praise to the children but never show favouritism to a particular child or group of children nor give rewards which are outside of Grovelands Childcare agreed policy.
- Promote and follow the rules of the outing
- Never be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when assisting as a volunteer.

Use of mobile phones, cameras and computers

Use of personal IT devices and mobile phones is prohibited. If you need to use your mobile phone in an emergency whilst on an outing, please speak with the designated person in charge and they will organise this. Using the video or camera features of your mobile phone whilst on an outing is strictly prohibited. The centres ICT equipment and mobile phones may only be used in accordance with Grovelands Childcare Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy

Safety procedures

Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the fire safety procedures and evacuation routes whilst on an outing. In the event of the alarm sounding, all volunteers should leave via the nearest available fire exit and should not try to recover personal belongings or search for children. The designated person in charge along with staff members will have the emergency contact details.

Volunteers remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries. Volunteers should not reprimand their own children whilst on the outing and ensure the Grovelands Childcare Behavioural Management Policy is adhered to at all times.

Medical issues

All medical information about children is strictly confidential and therefore only very limited information will be provided. If a child requires medical attention inform a member of staff immediately. They will get a qualified first aider to attend to the child. Volunteers should not administer first aid except in an emergency.

Confidentiality

All information you may hear or see about a child is of a confidential nature. You should not discuss any child outside of the childcare setting that you have been with directly or indirectly. This includes speaking to other parents about their child, speaking to family and friends and posting messages online about your experiences in our service. If other parents approach you for information, always explain that you are not allowed to discuss outing matters with them and ask them to speak with the centre manager.

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

I have read and understood the contents of the 'Volunteers Code of Conduct' with Grovelands Childcare. I agree to abide by the procedures and expectations for volunteers that are set out in this code.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



Healthy Eating Policy

Our Healthy Eating Policy ensures that the food and drink provided to the Early Years children attending the service is nutritious, and complies with the dietary or religious requirements of the child. Grovelands Childcare ensures that sufficient, suitable and nutritious food and drink are available to each child depending on their age, development and needs. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have around any of the following:

- Allergies or Specific Dietary Requirements
- Ethnic Traditions
- Vegetarianism
- Special Occasions where particular foods are included or excluded
- Any food fads their child is going through

Grovelands Childcare Nutritional Programme

Grovelands Childcare is aware that the Early years is the ideal time to introduce children to the social aspect of sharing mealtimes with others while introducing healthy eating habits and a variety of different textures and tastes. Directors work closely with the Catering and Nutrition staff to ensure the 3-week menu is nutritionally balanced and that it also caters for Specific Dietary Requirements and Allergies.

Grovelands Childcare prepare all meals and snacks in a clean safe environment and avoid adding salt or using very salty foods frequently. Snacks are provided between meals to meet children's higher energy requirements. The Catering and Nutritional staff use the food pyramid to ensure that all children receive the recommended number of servings from all food groups each day and that suitable portion sizes are offered

National Healthy Smart Start Programme

Grovelands Childcare has taken part in the National Healthy Smart Start Programme. Which promotes healthy eating and emotional well-being in pre-school children. Grovelands Childcare has been awarded as a "Healthy Ireland Pre-School" for their inclusion of Healthy Eating and promotion of Emotional Well-being in their yearly curriculum programmes. This Pre-school Health Promotion training programme is the result of over a decade of collaborative working led by the HSE Department of Health Promotion and Improvement in partnership with National Childhood Network, to ensure children in the pre-school settings are supported to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours in early childhood. The Training Programme reflects the aim of the Healthy Ireland Framework to bring all people together into a national movement with a single aim to ensure the best possible health and well-being of our nation. Parents who work as doctors or Dentists are invited into the centre regularly to talk to the children about the importance of healthy eating and oral health.

Specific Dietary Requirements

In order that we successfully meet the dietary requirements of each child, Grovelands Childcare follows the food and Nutrition Guidelines as set out by the Department of Health and Children. In consultation with parents we reserve the right to request advice on nutritional concerns where we feel a child's health may be at risk. If a child has some individual dietary requirements the parent will need to inform the centre Manager. The

manager will ensure the child's name is put on the Dietary Requirements list that states the child's name and the food they may be intolerant to.

Food Allergies

Grovelands Childcare has broken down the 3-week menu plan to clearly state the type of allergen that is included in each meal and the food source it is in. If a child has an individual or multitude of allergies towards one of the fourteen allergies it is highly important that this information is shared with the manager and the staff working in the room with your child. Children who suffer with allergies should have this information shared on their Child Record Forms at admittance stage.

Individual Care Plans for Children with Allergies

Managers will draw up an individual Care plan for your child so that staff can be aware of the signs to look out for if your child consumes food that was not meant for them. The Care plan will state what to do in a situation of a reaction either severe or mild. It will also state Emergency contact numbers of parents and what stage Emergency Services need to be called. If your child requires an Epi-pen or the equivalent in cases of bad reactions, the care plan will state where this is stored and the staff that are trained to administer this medication. See care plans on administration of medications policy.

Portions and Serving Sizes

The portion sizes in Grovelands Childcare are based on the Department of Health Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services. This publication was funded by Safe Food Ireland. It is based upon a research programme supported by safe food, in association with the Health Service Executive, Ireland

Food Suppliers to Grovelands Childcare

Grovelands Childcare ensures that all meat used for meals is traceable. A full list of suppliers is outside each of our kitchen areas. All fruit and vegetables are sourced locally and delivered fresh each week

Food and Drinks brought in from home

As Grovelands Childcare offers a wide variety of healthy, nutritious foods we request that parents do not bring in foods and drinks from home for the full day care and sessional children. Individual dietary requirements are respected and any child that shows signs of food fussiness is offered an alternative. All foods and drinks supplied in Grovelands Childcare is included in the requested fee at the admittance stage of registering a child.

Children taking part in the ECCE sessional programme will be requested to bring in a very small snack in order to prepare the children for lunch times when they transition to Primary School. It is important that parents follow the guidelines set out for these lunches by Túsla. This includes the following:

- No juice or high sugary drinks
- No cereal bars
- No sweets, crisps, bars, biscuits
- No yogurt or dairy products
- Grapes are cut lengthways to prevent choking
- Lunch boxes can be opened by the child
- No yogurt or chocolate covered rice cakes

Availability of Drinking Water

Fresh drinking water is available in all rooms in Grovelands Childcare Centres at all times. Children are taught how to use pouring jugs to develop hand-eye co-ordination and independence. Jugs of Fresh water are also placed on tables during meal times.

Snack Tables

Snack tables are an option in our rooms as a social activity to encourage small group times during the morning and evening activities. Children are encouraged to set the table with cutlery and Delph they require and can choose a time that best suits them to join the table. The children make choices and serve themselves. After they finish snack they are encouraged to tidy up after themselves. Staff will support children where required and remind children to have this snack if they are engaged in other activities.

Weekly Menu Plans

Grovelands Childcare provides a large range of different foods in a 3-week menu plan. This menu plan is displayed in the parent's area of each centre and also in the Kitchen area.

The 3-week menu plan also lists out the allergens in each food. If any child has a specific dietary requirement the parents can sit with the manager and go through this menu plan ensuring that an agreed alternative can replace any meals their child may not be able to have.

Breastfeeding Support

Breastfeeding provides important nutrients for babies. Some mothers may wish to continue breastfeeding while their children are in Grovelands Childcare. They may choose to adjust their work schedules so they can come and nurse the baby at the centre, they may collect and store breast milk for staff to feed the baby during the day, or they may have staff feed the baby formula during the day but continue nursing at home. The following information about breastfeeding babies can support nursing mothers and their babies.

Grovelands Childcare supports Breastfeeding mothers by being supportive and understanding of the parent and the child's needs. We will create a quiet, comfortable space for nursing mothers if you require this facility.

Preparing and Storing Breastmilk

Staff are made aware of the following factors in relation to preparing and storing Breast milk:

- Breast milk does not look like cow's milk or formula. In spite of its thin appearance and blue colour, breast milk is rich and nutritious. Thawed milk often has small pieces of fat floating in it that makes it look curdled. Warming and shaking the breast milk gently will help fat dissolve.
- Breast milk can be stored up to 48 hours in the refrigerator. All bottles are labelled with the baby's name and date. Breast milk will last up to 3 - 6 months in the back of a freezer that stays at zero degrees. Older milk will be used first.
- Be sure to gently swirl bottles of breast milk that have been refrigerated or frozen and thawed. Breast milk is not homogenized, and the cream separates out and rises to the top.

Infant Formula

Powdered infant formula is not sterile. It may contain bacteria that can make your baby sick. Parents must prepare all the feeds their babies will need at home and bring these to the centre each day.

If you need to do this please follow the below guidelines in recommended by Safefood and the HSE:

- Prepare feeds using water no less than 70°C, and cool quickly.
- Bring the feeds to the crèche in a cool bag with ice-packs.
- Label each of your baby's feeds carefully so they don't get mixed up with other feeds in the crèche.
- Staff will place the feeds in a dedicated fridge as soon as you arrive at the crèche. Feeds cannot be stored for longer than 24 hours.
- The temperature of the fridge will be 5°C or less. The fridge should have a thermometer so staff can check the temperature and adjust it if needed.
- Take home all feeding bottles when you collect your baby and throw away any leftover feed.
- Clean all bottles thoroughly at home and sterilise for the next day

Introducing Solid Foods

When introducing Solid Food to infants we recommend infant cereal at 4-6 months, vegetables, fruits and boiled water at 5-7 months. Proteins such as cheese, yogurt, cooked beans, meat, fish, chicken and egg yolk at 6-8 months. Whole egg at 10-12 months and milk at 12 months. We also introduce the use of a cup and spoon at 8-10 months. Any introduction of solid food will be discussed in partnership with the parents.

Storage, Preparation and Serving of Food

All staff preparing hot meals in Grovelands Childcare centres are fully trained in HACCP and follow correct guides for food preparation and storage.

Correct hand washing procedures are in place for all staff before meal times and children are shown and encouraged to do the same.

All refrigerated foods are stored in refrigerators that are 5° or less. All frozen foods are stored in freezers that are 0° or lower. All refrigerators and freezers temperatures are controlled daily with daily records kept in the kitchen areas.

Foods are cooked and temperatures checked before any serving has begun.

Birthday Parties and Celebrations

Grovelands Childcare understands that birthdays are a very important part to growing up and staff and children like to celebrate these milestones in each of the rooms. To follow our Healthy Eating policy, we ask that no sweets, crisps or bars are brought in to Grovelands Childcare. We do however invite parents to provide a small Birthday Cake for their child. Cakes are required to be store bought and in original packaging in order that we can identify the risks to children with food allergies. Children can sit on the birthday chair in their rooms while all the children sing Happy Birthday. Children according to their specific dietary requirement will have an opportunity to taste the birthday cake.

Supervision of Children while consuming food or drink

All children will be supervised while consuming food and drink. Staff are encouraged to set good examples for children and to sit with them during meal times. Children who are slow eaters will be given the time to eat and will not be rushed.

A Copy of the Meal Time Routine will follow this page

A Copy of centre 3-week Menu Plans is available on Parents Notice Board

Snack and Dinner Time Routine 2yrs +

- Staff wash own hands and then wear Aprons
- All children's hands should be cleaned (using soap and water)
- Table Cloths are placed on tables
- Children encouraged to set own tables using place mats, cups, plates, knives, forks and placing flowers in the centre of the table.
- Drinks are to be given with dinners and children are encouraged to use small jugs to pour out drinks
- Staff to sit with children during mealtimes and interact and encourage good eating habits (wearing apron) and role modelling (having a small portion of dinner if required)
- Children are asked to hold hands and say meal time poem

**“Thank you for the beautiful snack/ dinner
Thank you friends for being my friend
Thank you family for being my family
Thank you for everything the end
Enjoy your meal!”**

- Self help skills should be encouraged at all times Children encouraged to serve own dinners and pass serving tray onto next child
- Mulberry children should be using child sized knife and fork and be encouraged to try cut up own meat if desired, After School and Pre-School children should be using adult sized cutlery.
- Staff to encourage language development throughout Dinner Time. Staff should explain the meal and contents when serving and encourage conversation throughout the Dinner time.
- Children are asked to tidy plate, cutlery and glass into sink/basin after they have finished meal and scrap leftovers into food waste bin
- If a child for any reason is not hungry, dinner can be covered & stored labelled with the child's name in the kitchen to be heated up to correct temperature at a later stage in the day
- Dinner should be treated as another activity and learning experience for children, it should not be rushed and children should be encouraged to finish eating by themselves



Toddler snack and Dinner time routine

- Toddlers have alternate activities in another room to allow staff time to set up for break/ dinner
- Staff wash own hands and then wear Aprons
- Table Cloths placed on tables, flowers & table mats
- All children's hands should be cleaned (using soap and water)
- Toddlers encouraged to get their own plates and drinking cups
- Staff to sit with children during mealtimes and interact and encourage good eating habits as good role models also having a small amount of food if possible.
- Children hold hands and say meal time poem

**“Thank you for the beautiful snack/ dinner
Thank you friends for being my friend
Thank you family for being my family
Thank you for everything the end
Enjoy your meal!”** (clap hands and cheer at the end)

- Staff encourage children to help spoon meals onto their own plates discussing the type of food, the colour and the texture
- Toddlers are verbally communicated with explaining the meal and contents when serving
- Self-help skills should be encouraged at all times.
- Once finished the child's hand's and faces should be cleaned
- Toddlers are encouraged to tidy up plates into basin
- They can then be encouraged to go and read a story until all their friends have finished their meals.





Inclusion Policy

Mission Statement of Grovelands Childcare

At Grovelands Childcare we strive to give parents peace of mind, while being seen as a shining example of what a quality early education and care centre should be.

- We recognise the rights of the child
- We believe that each child is a unique Individual
- We are sensitive to a child's social, emotional, intellectual, physical, creative and spiritual needs
- We believe in providing a quality, stimulating, educational early learning childcare and after school care experience for all children that is developmentally appropriate.
- We believe that the strength of our Curriculum & Activities is in the training, continued professional development, mentoring and dedication of our staff.
- We establish consistent, age appropriate limits to help children function in their world.
- We desire to strengthen each child's own cultural identity, while instilling a respect for others who might be different
- We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life
- We strive to create mutual respect between parents and staff: a partnership for the benefit of the child
- We strive each day to be the best provider of the early years educational services in the community we serve
- we achieve care and inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach that is implemented by the early childhood services and by working in partnership with families, children and the early childhood team, both individually through reflective practice and in consultation with children and their families, so as to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that attend and use our service.

Grovelands Childcare is an organization that values people: the children in our care, their parents and our employees. We appreciate the supports from Government Agencies such as DCYA, Túsla, Better Start and AIM. We continually work to earn the trust placed in us.

Ethos of Grovelands Childcare

Grovelands Childcare ethos is to ensure that your child develops all the early life skills in a creative and stimulating environment where interaction and self-expression are actively encouraged. Grovelands Childcare will ensure an inclusive culture and will recognise that every child is an individual and has their own learning style.

Our vision is twofold and looks at the here and now and also the future. Our here and now goal is that you the parents will feel good about your childcare choice and that your children are safe, engaged, stimulated, educated, healthy, having fun and smiling. For the future that

your children will warmly look back at their experience with us and see it as a cherished part of their childhood.

Grovelands Childcare works off a play-based curriculum that is developed through the children's own achievements and emerging Interests in conjunction with Aistear and Síolta. Our centres also encourage the healthy development of relationships between children and Communities, helping children to interact and socialize and develop a sense of respect and care for their surroundings.

Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland; it was published towards the end of 2009. It provides information for staff to help them plan for, and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners, within loving relationships with others. Aistear describes the types of learning that are important for children in their early years, and offers ideas and suggestions as to how this learning may be nurtured.

Síolta is the national quality framework designed for use within all services working with children aged 0-6 years. It outlines standards of quality practice which services should aspire to. Síolta was devised by the former Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) and formally launched in 2006; it reflects and recognises Irish practice. Síolta is not designed to make all services the same, but rather to establish quality standards which can be achieved in many ways and through many types of curriculum.

Such commitment to standards of quality and excellence operates in all Grovelands Childcare facilities. Grovelands Childcare is notified to TúsIa, a member of the Early Childhood Ireland, Montessori Alliance, National Childcare Network and Seas Suas. Grovelands Childcare will promote and nurture the identity of each child attending the service and ensure that their emotional and physical well-being is of paramount importance at all times.

Policy Statement

This policy represents the agreed principles and committees for inclusion, in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter. The Grovelands Childcare early childhood service will implement this policy to support and develop an inclusive environment for children and adults within our early childhood service.

“Inclusion refers to a process involving a programme, curriculum or education environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development” (National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010)

The Inclusion Coordinator within our service is _____

The Inclusion Coordinator in Grovelands Childcare is there as a support to Practitioners and Parents in transitions, developing the inclusion policy, assisting Parents and Practitioners with applications for AIM, liaising with other support groups such as the Early Intervention Teams and Ensuring environments, curriculum, programme & activities meet the needs of all the children in the rooms.

Grovelands Childcare actively seeks to support learning and participation that does not hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all children attending the service.

Core principles of this strategy are:

- Work in partnership with parents.
- Support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging.
- Support children to become respectful of difference.
- Foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination.
- Implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under *Síolta: The National Quality Framework* (2006) and *Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework* (2009).
- Respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum.
- Support continual development for all early childhood practitioners, so as to ensure that they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

Early childhood practitioners work to ensure the following:

- Children feel secure and know that their contributions are valued.
- Children know they belong and are valued as unique individuals.
- All children's cultural backgrounds are respected and valued.
- Children feel strong and confident about their identity.
- Children are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success.
- Children use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Children have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
- Children are encouraged to participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of abilities.
- If a child uses an aid or assistive technology to communicate, that the device is used solely for this purpose.

Responsibilities of management and early childhood practitioners at Groveland Childcare: All families and children are encouraged to participate, accessing learning experiences through the curriculum on offer.

At Grovelands Childcare service, we promote children's individual learning according to their stage of development in line with the Child Care Act, 1991; Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2016; Disability Act 2005; Equal Status Acts 2000–2012; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular attention to Articles 29 and 30; and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011 and *Síolta* And *Aistear*.

Admissions Policy

Please see the Groveland Childcare Admissions Policy and guidelines, included in our Policies and Procedures for parents which contains all policies and procedures for the admissions to/enrolment in the service.

As children and families are the most knowledgeable about their background, culture, language, and physical and developmental needs, Grovelands Childcare will ensure that families are consulted when developing and implementing policy.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education

An effective diversity and equality approach will ensure that ability and diversity are recognised and celebrated, and that discrimination, inequality and exclusion are addressed.

Dealing with Discriminatory Incidents

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children need to know that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident.
- Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the setting. Recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. Be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service.

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow the Grovelands Childcare Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

The above policy will be re-evaluated at regular intervals throughout the year. We at Grovelands Childcare value your input.

If you have any queries in relation to the policy, please contact:

The Inclusion Coordinator in this centre is: _____

Directors: Ronan and Regina Bushell (Grovelands Childcare)

A Copy of our Parents Aim Information Leaflet will follow this page



Infection Control Policy

Safety Statement

Grovelands Childcare is an organisation that values people: the children in our care, their parents and our employees. We comply with the Health, Safety and Welfare Act 2005, and the associated General Application Regulations 2007, which sets out how the prevention of ill-health and accidents at work is to be achieved.

Our priority is to ensure the safety and health of our employees while they work, and the safety and health of other people who might be at the centres, including customers, visitors and members of the public.

To ensure our commitment as a company to their safety and health we ensure the following:

- Staff complete full inductions
- annual review of our company Policies and Procedures
- risk assessments completed where risks are identified a Policy or Procedure is put in place to control or manage these risks.
- Staff handbook is regularly reviewed and updated
- Clear guidelines in relation to accidents and incidents
- Clear guidelines in the administration of medications
- Covid-19 Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Provide necessary training where required
- when purchasing new equipment or altering/replacing existing equipment to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that they are free from hazards and of CE quality

The aim of this policy is to ensure an environment is provided in which children and adults are kept safe and staff members may safely carry out their roles.

Hand washing procedures in Grovelands Childcare

Handwashing is recommended when all staff arrive at work, when they are moving from one childcare group to another and whenever the hands are visibly dirty.

In addition, handwashing must also be carried out at the following times:

Before:

- Leaving Home
- The start of the work shift
- Eating, smoking, handling/preparing food or assisting/feeding a child
- Preparing meals, snacks and drinks (including babies' bottles)
- Before and after being on public transport
- Before and After caring for sick individuals or someone displaying symptoms of Covid-19

After:

- you enter a pod/room
- Coughing or Sneezing
- Before and after being on public transport
- Changing a task
- You arrive/ you leave

Updated: June 2020

To be Reviewed: June 2021

- You notice your hands are dirty
- Before and After caring for sick individuals or someone displaying symptoms of Covid-19
- Using the toilet or helping a child to use the toilet
- Nappy changing/ handling potties
- Being outdoors - Playing with or handling items in the playground – e.g. toys, sand, water
- Handling secretions e.g. from a child's nose or mouth, from sores or cuts
- Cleaning up vomit or faeces
- Handling or dealing with waste
- Removing disposable gloves and/or aprons
- Handling pets/pet litter, animals/cages/animal soil, etc.
- After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc.
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.
- Touching potentially contaminated surfaces

Grovelands Childcare recommends following the correct hand washing procedure as follows:

- Wet hands under warm running water to wrist level
- Apply liquid soap. Lather it evenly covering all areas of the hands for at least **20** seconds. Include the thumbs, finger tips, palms and in between the fingers, rubbing backwards and forwards at every stroke (see Posters on handwashing technique displayed throughout centres in bathrooms and rooms)
- Rinse hands off thoroughly under warm running water
- Dry with paper towel using a patting motion to reduce friction, taking special care between the fingers
- Use the disposable paper towel that has been used to dry the hands to turn off taps
- Dispose of the disposable paper towel in a waste bin using the foot pedal to avoid contaminating hands that have just been washed
- Wearing gloves is not a substitute for handwashing
- Child handwashing and drying is Supervised by staff at all times

Facilities for Handwashing

Grovelands Childcare provides liquid soap and wall mounted disposable paper towel dispensers, and wash hand basins with hot and cold mixer taps in:

- Nappy changing areas
- Playrooms and baby rooms (especially for adults)
- Food preparation areas
- Toilets (staff and children)

A waste bin should be located next to each basin for paper towel disposal. Waste bins should be foot pedal operated.

If your hands are not visibly dirty, wash them with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser. We recommend that this be completed every 30mins. Staff should refrain from touching their face.

Handwashing products

Grovelands Childcare recommends handwashing with liquid soap and warm running water as recommended. Anti-bacterial soap is not necessary or recommended. An anti-bacterial soap

will be required in food preparation areas. Liquid soap dispensers are wall mounted in the centres and have individual replacement cartridges that are discarded when empty.

Supervising Children's handwashing techniques

Staff are required to observe and supervise children's handwashing and drying at all times. Posters should be displayed in handwashing areas to encourage the children to follow the correct procedure. Songs like 'Twinkle, Twinkle, little star' or 'happy birthday' twice can be used as a means of encouraging children to wash hands for the recommended 20 seconds.

Note some children may develop obsessional behaviour related to hand hygiene and may damage their skin through excessive washing

Hand Sanitizers

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

How to apply Hand Sanitizers

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Staff must take caution when using sanitizers around young children. Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Hand sanitizers should be kept out of reach of children.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals

Respiratory Hygiene Controls – Coughing and Sneezing

Covering coughs and sneezes and keeping hands clean can help prevent the spread of serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and COVID-19. Germs can be easily spread by:

- Coughing, sneezing, or talking
- Touching your face with unwashed hands after touching contaminated surfaces or objects
- Touching surfaces or objects that may be frequently touched by other people

Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands are especially important for infection control measures in Childcare settings.

To help stop the spread of germs:

- Foot operated pedal bins that are lined with a plastic bag are provided for disposal of used/soiled tissues
- Cloth handkerchiefs are not used
- Staff and Children are taught to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze
- Throw used tissues in the trash and hands are washed after contact with respiratory secretions
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands
- A different tissue should be used on each child, and staff ensure to wash their hands after nose wiping
- Outdoor activities are encouraged when weather permits

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- Cots or sleeping beds are spaced apart

Remember to immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent yourself and your loved ones from getting sick, especially at key times when you are likely to get and spread germs.

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands

General Infection controls

To ensure that the spread of infection is at a minimum, Grovelands Childcare has a strict cleaning programme. All rooms in the centre have cleaning sheets that are required to be filled out daily after the cleaning has been completed.

Grovelands Childcare also provides hand sanitizer at the main entrances and parents and children are requested to use it when entering the building.

Staff are aware that they are to wear protective clothing gloves and aprons during nappy changes, in the event of blood and bodily fluid spillages, washing and emptying potties, at meal times and food prep times throughout the day, when handling waste, general cleaning times and in the event of cleaning pet cages/tanks.

All sleeping children have individual bed sheets and blankets that are washed regularly in the centre using a hyper allergenic detergent. All bedding is individually labelled to ensure it is not used by another child. Sleeping beds and cots are at least 50cm apart.

In Grovelands Childcare all detergents and cleaning products are used correctly and are diluted according to manufacturer's instructions. Toys are sterilized weekly and records are kept of this sterilization in the room diaries.

The Safe Management of Perishable food

- perishable food is kept in a refrigerator or cool place at temperatures between 0-5
- perishable food is not left at room temperature for more than 2 hours
- perishable food left at room temperature for 2 hours or longer is discarded
- children are requested to not bring in perishable foods from home
- the temperatures of fridges and freezers are checked with an appliance thermometer
- the staff working in the kitchen are aware of cross contamination and understand the importance of the correct storage of raw and cooked foods
- All staff handling food and involved in food preparation have a HACCP qualification
- Regular stock takes are done and any food that has passed its used by date is discarded
- Opened dates and used by dates are put on foods that are stored in freezers or refrigerators.

Child Immunisations

Preventing an illness is preferable to treating it once it has developed. There are now many safe and effective vaccines against many serious and deadly illnesses. Some are given routinely to all the population, others only to individuals thought to be at high risk of certain infections.

Maintaining Immunisation Records

Grovelands Childcare has a legal requirement to maintain immunisation records on all children attending. Prior to enrolment parents should be asked for a copy of their child's immunisation passport or record card. This is contained in the booklet "Your child's immunisation - A Guide for parents" which parents receive at the first public health nurse visit after their baby's birth. The immunisation passport should continue to be updated in Grovelands Childcare as the child receives his/her immunisations.

The Safe Management of Children who are not Immunised

Parents have a right to immunise their child/children or not. In the event of an outbreak all parents will be verbally informed. A dated notice informing all parents of any infectious disease outbreak, will also be displayed on the notice board. If your child is not immunised, the parents will need to seek advice, information and support from the HSE. Parents of children who are not immunised will be requested to put a note on their child's individual file stating that they are not immunised.

When Getting your Child Vaccinated

Grovelands Childcare recommends that parents try to get their children vaccinated on a Friday evening in the event that their child becomes unwell due to the vaccination.

Procedures for managing outbreaks and reporting notifiable diseases to the Inspectorate

Parents are required to notify the director Regina Bushell and the centre Manager, if their child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Public Health doctors are responsible for the prevention and control of all notified disease. Should an outbreak occur they may contact you directly. If your child is diagnosed with such an infection all parents with children attending may be contacted by the HSE. This is normal procedure in these circumstances.

The manager will contact the local Department of Public Health in the event of the following:

- If they have a concern about a communicable disease or infection, or if you need advice on controlling them
- If they are concerned that the number of children who have developed similar symptoms is higher than normal
- If they think that you may have an outbreak of infectious disease in your facility
- If they are not sure whether to exclude a child or member of staff
- Before sending letters to parents about an infectious disease.

Although the child's doctor is legally responsible for reporting serious illness, parents should phone their local Department of Public Health if they become aware that a child or member of staff has a serious or unusual illness, (for example meningitis), or if a number of children or staff have the same symptoms suggesting an outbreak.

Grovelands Childcare will ensure that all rooms, equipment, toilets, changing rooms, kitchens, walls & doors are all disinfected in the event of an outbreak.

The procedures for exclusion from the service relating to illness

Management reserve the right to ask a parent to collect their child from a centre should we deem it necessary. We must all work together to create and maintain a safe, caring and healthy environment for the children under our care.

In the event of your child becoming unwell during the course of the day, the manager will inform the parents of their condition. The manager will request the parents to collect their child as soon as possible. Grovelands Childcare recommends that parents have an Emergency plan in place, in the event that their child needs to be collected due to illness. AS stated in the Administration of Medication Policy, any child who requires an anti-biotic is required to stay at home for the first 24-48 hours depending on the illness. It is important that parents contact the centre manager and inform them of the illness when a professional has diagnosed the child, so that we can inform the other parents should it be deemed necessary.

It is important that parents allow sufficient recuperation time for children who are sick. Children who are sick should not be sent into Grovelands Childcare, it causes upset and stress to your child and can cause the unnecessary spread of infection to other children, their families and to the staff members. If this situation arises Grovelands Childcare reserves the right to request that the child be taken home. The centres environments are not a place for a sick child.

Grovelands Childcare has a guideline of incubation periods for illness. It is important that these are followed by managers, staff and parents at all times to prevent the spread of infection.

Parents are required to have a backup plan should your child become unwell during the course of the day and you are not in a position to collect them yourself. This contact should be listed in your nominated contacts on your child's record form.

The procedures for the management of poultry, animals and fish that the children have access to:

Pets in Grovelands Childcare will be carefully chosen in regard to care, temperament, health risks and appropriateness for young children. When children have allergies to a room pet, the pet will be removed and the area will be cleaned and disinfected. Parents should inform a member of staff if their child has any allergies to animals. We do not allow animals that bite, are aggressive or animals whose behaviour can harm.

The following procedures and practices are in place for the management of pets:

- Animals will be properly cared for (clean water, clean cages, and immunized where necessary)
- Animals, their cages and any other equipment will not be allowed in the food prep area
- Staff will be assigned duties to maintain the pets
- Children will be closely supervised when handling pets
- Children and adults are required to wash their hands using the correct hand washing procedure after handling or feeding animals
- Children will not clean cages or have access to animal waste
- Staff will wear disposable gloves when cleaning out cages/fish tanks.
- Staff are required to wash hands after cleaning animal cages or equipment

- Birds of the parrot family that carry psittacosis, a respiratory illness, as well as reptiles and amphibians that typically carry salmonella - a bacteria that can cause serious disease in humans will NOT be permitted
- Parent notices will be displayed detailing the type of pet if any in each room
- Parents will be informed in writing if pets are visiting, prior to the event
- Parents and staff will receive written notification of any updates regarding this policy
- Parents will be asked to sign a permission slip to allow their child or children to be involved in the care of their room pet

Information about infection control on zoo and farm outings

Visits to farms and zoos have grown in popularity over recent years; they are considered to be both educational and an enjoyable leisure pastime. Such visits give children the chance to have contact with animals they otherwise might not see and to see where food comes from. There are many potential hazards (as with domestic pets) on open farms, including pet- and animal-farms and zoos. It is important to remember that diseases affecting animals can sometimes be passed on to humans.

Before the visit, the manager will make contact with the farm or zoo being visited to discuss visit arrangements and to ensure that adequate infection control measures are in place. The manager will ensure they are satisfied that the pet farm/zoo is well managed and precautions taken to reduce the risk of infection to visitors. The manager will also ensure that handwashing facilities are adequate, accessible to small children, with running hot and cold water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels, clean towels, or air dryers and waste containers.

Grovelands Childcare will ensure that staff understand the need to make sure the children wash, or are helped to, wash their hands after contact with animals.

During the visit:

- Children must be well supervised at all times
- Check that cuts and grazes are covered with a waterproof plaster
- Hands should be washed with warm running water and dried thoroughly after contact with animals/animal's feed, before eating and drinking, using the toilet and leaving the farm. Children will require supervised handwashing.
- Children should not eat or drink anything while touring the farm
- Children should only eat in the designated areas
- Children should not put fingers in their mouths or the mouths of animals
- Children should wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy shoes or Wellingtons but not sandals
- Visitors should not drink from taps unless specifically labelled as drinking water
- Staff and children should not touch compost, animal waste and after any accidental contact should wash their hands thoroughly
- Since boots and clothes can become contaminated during the visit it is important to remember to get children to wash their hands after removing the clothes and boots and before doing anything else (e.g. eating). Dirty boots should be cleaned with hot water and detergent. Footwear should be changed or cleaned before leaving and then hands washed

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- Grovelands Childcare suggests that Pregnant women should not handle sheep or new born lambs

After the visit:

- If a member of the group shows signs of illness (e.g. vomiting and/or diarrhoea) after a farm/zoo visit, they will be advised to visit their GP and explain that they have had recent contact with farm animals.
- If two or more members are ill, they will follow the above action. The childcare manager will also contact their local Department of Public Health as further action may be necessary

Infection control and safety requirements for nappy changing and toileting of children

- Changing mats in the nappy changing unit are waterproof, have an easily cleanable cover and are in a good state of repair, that is, no breaks or tears,
- Nappy changing mats and units are cleaned after each nappy change
- Potties are cleaned thoroughly after each use
- Children's and Staff hands are washed after Nappy changing, Potty use and Toileting
- The Nappy Changing Procedure is visible in all changing rooms
- New staff are inducted to complete the correct Nappy Changing Procedure
- Children are never left on changing mats or toilet areas unattended

Risk management in relation to infection control

The following is the steps staff take to ensure risk management is controlled in relation to Infection Control:

- All sand and water trays along with equipment emptied and disinfected
- Toys and other equipment disinfected
- Playdough/textural/sensory activities replaced
- Bathrooms and Changing Rooms disinfected
- Rooms, tables, chairs and areas all disinfected
- Beds and bedding disinfected and washed immediately
- Notice displayed for parents
- Parents contacted in cases of no immunisations
- The manager will record the numbers and illness of children absent
- Nappies double bagged if necessary
- Bins double bagged if necessary and waste stored for 72 hours before being disposed of
- Managers ensure parents are adhering to the policies and procedures in relation to illness




A copy of the Grovelands Childcare Guidelines for incubation periods will follow this page








A copy of the Hand Washing Procedure will follow this page







Guideline for Incubation Periods at Grovelands Childcare



Please Note the Type of Infection and the Incubation period below

Type of Infection	Signs and Symptoms	Recommended Incubation Period
Chicken Pox		7-14 days (until spots have dried up)
Hand, Foot & Mouth		4-7 days until infection is cleared
Impetigo		Until Lesions are crusted and healed 48 hours after Anti-Biotic Treatment
Slapped Cheek		Infectious before rash appears Depending on severity and form
Shingles		Minimum 5 days (until spots have dried up)
Ringworm		24 hours after appropriate treatment has commenced

Type of Infection	Signs and Symptoms	Recommended Incubation Period
Diarrhoea & Vomiting/ Gastroenteritis		48 hours after last episode
Conjunctivitis		24 hours after anti-biotic drops has been started Or Until eyes have completely cleared up of infection and discharge if on over the counter medications
Headlice		Until treatment has started
Oral Thrush		24 after Anti-biotic treatment
Viral Sore Throat		24 to 48 hours
Rotavirus		2-3 days
Whooping Cough		5 to 21 days 5 days from Anti-biotic treatment depending on severity

Type of Infection	Signs and Symptoms	Recommended Incubation Period
Flu		1-3 days
Croup		24 to 48 hours after treatment
Meningitis/ Septicaemia		Until fully Recovered
Mumps		5 days after onset of swelling
E-coli 0157 VTEC		Must be excluded immediately until microbiological clearance
German Measles (Rubella)		6 days from onset of rash

Handwashing Technique

Preparation



1. Remove hand and wrist jewellery (including hand allowed) N/C. Keep each short



2. Wet hands thoroughly under warm running water



3. Apply 500ml of antiseptics soap to support hand by pressing dispenser with heel of hand (do not use finger tips on the dispenser)

Handwashing – (process takes at least 15 seconds)



4. Rub palm to palm 5 times



5. Rub right palm over the back of left hand up to wrist level 5 times. Do the same with the other hand



6. Rub left palm over back of right hand up to wrist level 5 times. Do same with the other hand



7. Rub palm to palm with the fingers interlocked



8. Wash thumb of each hand separately using a rotating movement



9. Rub the tips of the fingers against the opposite palm using a circular motion. Also ensure nail beds are washed



10. Press hands thoroughly under running water to remove all traces of soap



11. Turn off taps using elbows



12. Dry hands completely using a disposable paper towel



13. Drop paper towel in waste bin. Open bin using foot pedal only to avoid contaminating clean hands

Supported by PEI
 Developed by Infection Control Team
 St. James's Hospital



Clean your hands
 Say no to infection

LET'S WASH OUR HANDS

GET READY!

- 

1 TURN ON WATER
- 

2 WET HANDS
- 

3 ADD SOAP
- 

4 RUB HANDS TOGETHER
- 

5 SCRUB IN BETWEEN FINGERS
- 

6 AND OVER WRISTS
- 

7 RINSE THE SOAP OFF
- 

8 DRY YOUR HANDS

ALMOST DONE!

GREAT JOB!



Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy

Grovelands Childcare is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all of the children in our care. We are committed to ensuring that all staff members responsible for the personal care of children undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. All hygiene and safety practices used in the service are consistent with recommendations from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and the HSE.

Nappy Changing

We respond to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training. We work in close partnership with parents/guardians to share information and provide continuity of care. This includes asking for information from parents about the words and practices used at home for nappy changing or toileting and supporting toilet training.

Nappy changing is carried out with utmost care following best practice guidelines on safety, hygiene and positive interactions during daily routines. A clear nappy changing procedure is outlined and displayed in the changing *area/room* to be followed by all staff members who are changing children's nappies.

Parents are required to provide the following for children who require nappy changes:

- Wipes/ Cotton Wool
- A large pack of nappies
- Cream

Only creams and lotions provided by parents for their child, or specifically prescribed for an individual child, will be used for that child. They will not be used on a child for whom they have not been specifically provided or prescribed.

Toileting

Our intention is that no child will ever be left in wet or soiled clothing. As soon as a member of staff responsible for a child is aware of the child having wet or soiled themselves, they will clean them. The wet or soiled clothing will be wrapped in a plastic bag and sealed for parents to take home. At all times the member of staff will pay attention to the level of distress and comfort of the child and will only help them to change with their agreement. We will do our best to provide reassurance and encouragement to the child. In the event a child is reluctant and then refuses, their parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. If the child is ill the staff member will phone their parent/guardian.

We will do our best to avoid drawing attention to such events and to positively support and encourage children in their efforts to become as independent as they are able. Where there is a decision made in partnership with parents to devise an individualised toilet training plan – based on the child's developmental level and their readiness to learn – this is co-ordinated with the parents/guardians and records are kept in the child's individual record.

At all times interactions are warm and positive and children's cues are responded to quickly. Children who are out of nappies or who are training have unrestricted access to the toilet. We work with parents to support toilet training, when a child shows readiness - unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why it may not be appropriate for toilet training to begin. Where specialist equipment and facilities, above what is currently available in the service, are required, every effort will be made through accessing the support of AIM (Access

and Inclusion Model) to provide appropriate facilities in a timely fashion. This will be done following agreement with parents/guardians and with the support of a Physiotherapist and/or an Occupational Therapist if necessary.

[Issues can sometimes cause toilet training to be delayed and up to about the age of 4 years some young children may not be ready for training. Also, it may not always be apparent if a delay in a child's independent toileting is due to a medical need or delayed development. It is important to make reasonable adjustments for all children, given that later identification of impairment/disability may occur.]

One child will be cared for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more than one adult present. In such a case, the reasons are documented. Personal care arrangements are discussed with parents/guardians on a regular basis. The needs and wishes of the child and their parents are taken into account wherever possible, within the constraints of staffing and in accordance with equality legislation.

In the event of their child having an unexpected need for help with personal care (for example in the case of a toilet 'accident' or wet clothing), parents/guardians are always informed on the day. This information is communicated to the parent discreetly in person, by phone or by sealed note.

All children are treated with respect at all times and in particular in relation to toileting and when personal care is given. No child will be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or discomfort. The privacy and dignity of each child is maintained and respected at all times.

Interactions

Nappies are changed as necessary, in a timely manner and in response to a child's cues indicating discomfort or a child exhibiting behaviour that suggests a soiled or wet nappy. Explanations are given to children (including to young babies) about what is happening when they need a nappy change, in a straightforward and reassuring way.

Strong signs are given that enable the child to anticipate and prepare for the events, for example a baby can be shown a clean nappy to indicate the intention to change their nappy.

Children are always approached gently and with consideration, and always from in front, when they are being taken for a nappy change.

The words used for parts of the body and bodily functions are agreed with parents to help ensure continuity.

It is important there is consistency in practice and communication between and with all staff regarding nappy changing and toileting practices.

Children are encouraged to be as independent as they are able to be and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable.

Children who are toilet trained or training are prompted by asking or reminding them about using the toilet to help avoid 'accidents'. (if a child is encouraged to 'hold on' too long on a regular basis it may cause problems in the future with poor bladder emptying. On the other hand, bringing a child to the toilet too often can lead to reduced bladder capacity and also the

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child will not get the opportunity to experience ‘full bladder’ messages which they would learn to recognise as signals to go to the toilet.)

Staff members are always positive about toilet training so that encouragement is communicated in their language and behaviour.

Children don’t have to wait to use the toilet when one is available and are allowed to take their time during toileting.

Parents and the child are reassured that, if the child has an accident, it is not a problem and children will not be made to feel that it is an issue.

Child Protection

Please see Child Protection Policy and Procedures

When assistance is required in relation to personal care for a child, the staff member ensures that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the activities to be undertaken.

Cameras and smartphones are **never** to be taken into the changing area or the toilet area/s.

Partnership with parents

All toilet training and toileting related decisions and plans are made in partnership with parents.

Parents are consulted about the words and the practices used at home for nappy changing and toileting, to help ensure consistency and continuity of care for the child as far as possible.

Families are encouraged to provide older children who are toilet trained or training with clothes that make it easier for them to toilet independently, for example, elasticated pants that are easy to pull up and down.

Toileting ‘accidents’

When a child who is not using nappies wets or soils themselves accidentally, they are cleaned immediately.

This may involve the member of the staff taking the child to an appropriate place in the toilet area or the changing *area/room*, helping the child to remove their soiled clothes; cleaning their skin (this may include bottom, genitalia, legs, feet); helping the child to dress in the child’s own spare clothes; and wrapping soiled clothes in plastic bags (double wrapping if necessary) to give to parents to take home.

The member of staff responsible checks the child regularly to ensure that they are clean and dry before leaving to go home.

It is essential to balance the child’s privacy with their safety and the safety of the staff member. A staff member taking a child into the changing room informs another staff member *and* records the time of the nappy change.

Hand washing

Both adults' and children's hands are washed after nappy changing and toileting. Hand sanitisers or alcohol-based hand rubs are not a substitute for hand washing. Gloves are not a substitute for handwashing – hands must always be washed before leaving the changing room/area.

Guidelines for use of potties

Potties must be used in the toilet area only.

After a child has used a potty:

- Put on disposable gloves and apron and put contents of the potty into a toilet.
- Remove residue with toilet roll and flush down the toilet.
- Clean the potty with disinfectant spray and paper towels.
- Remove gloves and apron.
- Wash your hands.
- Then help the child to wash their hands.
- Put potty in a clean, dry area — do not store potties one inside the other.

Potties must never be washed in the designated hand washing sink. Potties must be stored out of reach of children when not in use.

Guidelines for nappy changing

Staff members undertaking nappy changes should not be involved in the preparation, cooking or serving of food. If this is unavoidable, the staff member should wear a disposable apron as well as gloves and wash their hands. Please note: The apron for food preparation must be a new apron separate from any used for nappy changing.

Nappies must be changed in the designated changing room/area.

The door to the changing room/area should be closed when the room/area is in use and after leaving the room/area.

Guidance for nappy changing and toileting on outings

- Advance consideration must be given to arrangements for offsite activities.
- Every child's right to privacy must be respected and children should be changed only in an appropriate place where their privacy and dignity can be maintained.
- This area should be clean, warm and safe.
- Appropriate facilities must be available – such as a changing mat, child's toilet seat or potty.
- Parents are asked to provide all necessary consumables which could include: nappies, baby wipes, nappy sacks, and plastic bags for soiled clothing.
- Changes of clothing must also be made available by parents.

A copy of the nappy changing Procedure will follow this page



Missing Child Policy

Principle

To minimise the likelihood of children going missing while in the care of Grovelands Childcare and to provide the correct procedure to follow should that happen. As per Regulation, Tusla must be informed in the event of a missing child, outbreak of disease or hospitalisation.

Statement of Intent for the Missing Childs Policy

All children while attending Grovelands Childcare are of equal importance and are cared for equally. Staff are deployed, and the building is used in such a way as to minimise the chance of children removing themselves from the main group without being noticed, whilst allowing them a free choice of activities. In this way staff can be made immediately aware of a child needing help or support and react accordingly.

Procedure to Prevent Missing Children

- Children are welcomed into their room by a key worker or a designated member of staff
- Children are signed in and out of roll books daily
- The main door is kept secure at all times when a member of staff is not on duty at the entrance
- Children's times of arrival and departure are noted on the Register or if the child leaves early, and a note in room diaries is made if a child leaves with another adult
- Staff are deployed throughout the setting during the session, ensuring that no child is left alone for any period of time without an adult being aware of their location.
- The outdoor area is supervised
- The outdoor area is securely fenced and the gate secure at all times
- The rooms in which the children play are never left unsupervised/ out of vision of staff members
- A manager, supervisor or designated person in charge remains on duty at all times
- If all the children are outside and a child needs to come indoors, a member of staff will accompany them inside
- Visitors must buzz in before the door is unlatched to allow them access to the building

In the Event of a member of Staff not being able to locate a child on the premises

1. The premises will be searched thoroughly and immediately
2. The register will determine which child/ children are missing
3. The grounds surrounding Grovelands Childcare will be searched
4. The manager will notify the local Garda
5. The manager will inform parents
6. A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate

In the Event of a child going missing on an outing

Risk Assessments are carried out by managers before an outing commences. Staff are informed to take regular roll calls throughout outings, including before they get on bus and when they are on the bus. When they arrive, during the course of the day (regular 30min

checks), before they get onto the bus to leave, when they are on the bus and when they arrive back to the centre. Staff are requested to physically check the attendance of each child and to sign off on this. Parents usually attend large outings and are responsible for their own child.

For outings that involve bus journeys the bus must be searched by a member of staff on disembarkment from back to front and results recorded. This is carried out on every journey.

The following procedures are followed in the event of a child going missing on an outing:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person/parent and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that
- The Manager contacts the local Garda station and reports the child as missing. Then follow their instructions
- The manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed if they are not already with the group
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting if applicable
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the local Garda station if the child is not found.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made where appropriate.

In the Event of an After-School Child not coming on bus from School

You are requested to notify in advance the centre manager or supervisor of days you do not require this service/days your child will not be attending Grovelands Childcare to avoid unnecessary concern for either the child or the staff member on pick up duty. Parents please note it is the responsibility of the Bus Drivers and schools to ensure the children are on the bus going to Grovelands Childcare and it is your responsibility as a parent to ensure that your child's teachers and principle are aware that they will be travelling by bus to Grovelands Childcare.

In the event of an After-School Child not arriving to Grovelands Childcare:

- One staff member talks to the other children on the bus to see if they have seen them
- Another staff member rings the bus company to ensure they are not still on the bus or have gotten off at a different location
- The Manager/Supervisor will contact the school to see if they are still at the school and to ensure they attended that day
- The manager/Supervisor will contact the parent and inform them of the situation
- A designated staff member will drive to the school with the centre mobile
- The manager will keep in contact with the bus company, school and parent
- The manager will contact the local Garda if required

In the event of an After-School Child not at the School for Collections:

- The designated staff member will enter the school and talk with personnel to see if child was in attendance
- If child was in attendance that day but is now missing, the staff will ask the school to follow their policy regarding Missing Child
- The designated staff member will contact the manager of Grovelands Childcare

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- The manager will then contact the parents
- Communication between school, parents and garda will be done by manager
- If the child has not been in attendance the manager will inform parents about the procedures to ring the centre regarding child absenteeism.



Outdoor Play Policy

Access to the Outdoor Play Environment

The outdoor play environment is located adjoined to the indoor facilities. Outdoor environments as with those indoors also follow the principles of The Reggio-Emilia Approach allowing for this environment to become the third teacher. They are designed to offer a wide diverse range of play experiences to develop smells, senses, physical play, social play, dramatic/fantasy play, intellectual play, cognitive play, textural play and support inclusion.

We believe that with the correct clothing children should be able to access the outdoors regardless of the weather daily. Outdoor play is scheduled into each of the Rooms routine daily.

Parents need to be aware that whilst the children are getting Messy outdoors, this is of huge importance to their learning and development.

Measures to deal with weather conditions

Parents are asked to leave a spare pair of wellies in the centre to allow for their child to access the outdoors even if it is a little wet. It is important that children are dressed daily with the correct clothing to allow them to access the outdoor environment.

If a child is too unwell to go outdoors, they are too unwell to attend the centre, as the outdoor environment is an extension of their play and learning environments. Managers will take into account if a child is suffering an individual Respiratory need that requires them to be indoors however, a note may be required from a professional in individual circumstances.

Sun Protection

Parents are requested to provide a bottle of sun screen to the centre which staff can apply on their child when going outdoors. A sun hat should also be provided to protect the children further. Parents must ensure that they apply sun Protection on their children before they arrive in the centre. Staff will reapply this throughout the day. Parents will be requested to sign permission in order to allow staff to apply sun cream.

If a parent does not want staff to administer sunscreen, they must provide this in a written document and suitable clothing should be worn to protect the skin and prevent sunburn.

Children will have access to drinking water whilst outdoors. In times of extreme hot weather, managers will use their discretion to ensure children are indoors for the hot periods throughout the day (This can vary from 11am – 3pm)

Planning for learning

The outdoor play area is included in all planning for learning.

It is important to ensure that:

- Children are enabled to access the outdoors on a daily basis taking appropriate measures to deal with the weather conditions for example wellies, warm clothing and hats or long sleeves and sun protection, are provided.
- The outdoor play area is used as a context and a natural resource for learning and development.
- Children are consulted about their interests, needs and wishes for outdoor play and the outdoor environment.
- Children are given the opportunity to plan and have ownership of their learning in the outdoors.
- The particular strengths and needs of each child are considered.
- A wide variety of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences are planned for to ensure that children's learning and development needs are met under all four themes of Aistear:
 - Wellbeing
 - Communicating
 - Exploring and Thinking
 - Identity and Belonging
- The opportunities for appropriate challenge and risk-taking in play are considered in planning.
- The learning that happens in the outdoor play area is observed, assessed and recorded in the same way as learning indoors.

The Play Opportunities Outdoors for your Child/Children

Playing freely outdoors helps children with the development of social skills, spatial awareness, cooperation, communication and sensory awareness. Outdoor play can also assist children to learn about decision making, develop their ability to share, develop conceptual ability, the ability to imagine an idea without seeing it in practice, learn about their body and their ability as well as become more independent and address their fears.

Children need to be provided with the opportunities to try out new things this may involve children getting dirty, wet, or falling over, these experiences help to build children's confidence and is an important part of learning about skills, limitations and risk management.

Supervision in the Outdoor Play Area

All children are supervised in the outdoor play areas. If children request to go indoors, they will be accompanied by a staff member.

The same adult: child ratios are applied in the garden areas as indoors and staff ensure to observe in different learning areas throughout the garden.

Staff are required to check all children in attendance when they return indoors to ensure no child is left unattended in the outdoor environment. Staff are also required to bring Roll books outdoors for easy access to headcounts.

There is an element of risk to some of the materials available to them in the garden including gardening tools and outdoor blocks. The staff ensure that the children are shown the correct

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ways of using these materials and supervise the use of these materials at all times. Staff are all made aware of risk areas in the outdoor environment. (Tops of slides, bridges, Tools)

Any equipment damaged or of concern should be reported immediately to the centre manager.

Safety Requirements

The Outdoor Play Area is directly joined to the indoor facilities. A daily outdoor Site Safety check is completed by a Designated Staff member who ensures the outdoor areas are clutter free, free from animal droppings that the equipment is safe and secure. Any maintenance of outdoor equipment is recorded in the Maintenance file in reception.

The outdoor areas are designed to ensure correct supervision of children at all times. We ask that parents be aware that due to the element of risky play in the outdoor environments that minor accidents can occur.



Record Keeping Policy

Obligated Record Keeping

Grovelands Childcare is obliged to keep certain documentation in relation to records as set out by Regulations such as Registration of Pre-School Service Regulation 6, Management and Recruitment Regulation 9, Review of pre-school service regulation 14, copy of act and the 2016 regulations, regulation 18, Regulation 24, 26,28,32 and Pobal documentation Requirements.

When abuse/neglect is suspected separate and confidential records will be kept by the centre. The record will include name, address and age of the child; timed and dated observations (without comment or interpretation); exact quotations from the child; the dated name and signature of the recorder. These files will be stored on a need to know basis and will be filed away in locked presses.

Data Protection

In order to work effectively Grovelands Childcare needs to gather and process information (Data) relevant to staff, children, parents/carers, professionals and other individuals who are or may become involved in the day-to-day running of our centres in Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar.

The Data Protection Act gives individuals the right to access information that an organisation holds on them. In order to comply with this part of the act, Grovelands Childcare have in place effective means of extracting or retrieving information if it is required by authorised individuals.

The Data Controller is the manager in each of the centres and they have access to all sensitive information. In some cases, limited access is given to the Designated person in charge. All sensitive staff record files are updated and kept in Head Office and are only accessible to the Senior Management Team or Directors. Details of staff members are also available electronically i.e. Name, address, phone number, qualifications, holidays, Attendance & Illness. General child and Parent Information is kept on paper and electronically. Given the nature of the business, for health and safety reasons and also to comply with legislation, it is available to all staff members currently employed in each individual centre.

Any information that parents disclose in confidence will be locked in their file in reception. Such information will only be disclosed on a need to know basis. Private information is kept as long as deemed necessary and then destroyed.

Staff are aware of their duty and responsibility where confidentiality is concerned and any breach of contract in this regard will result in suspension or termination of employment.

Any party seeking information must make a request in writing to the centre manager. All parties involved will be informed of the request for information and where appropriate permission will be sought to disclose the requested information. Information on children and parents/carers is kept private and not disclosed at any time without the prior consent of the parent/carer involved.



Recruitment & Student Policy

Procedures to be followed when Hiring & the Application Process

Grovelands Childcare have a strict recruitment process in place. Grovelands Childcare will hire individuals that are kind, reliable, professional, qualified, work as part of a team, are good communicators and have strengths and abilities such as creativity, a knowledge of regulations and enthusiastic with a genuine love for working with children.

Below is a list of the procedures followed when hiring an employee and the application Process:

- Advertisement of position
- Application forms sent out
- Interviews for applicants that meet criteria
- Interview
- Job Offer
- Job Description
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Garda Vetting and/or police Closures
- References Verified
- Copy of Qualifications
- Copy of Photographic ID
- Induction

How Job Vacancies are Advertised

Grovelands Childcare advertises vacancies both locally and nationally. As well as press advertising Grovelands Childcare uses the following sites to advertise positions:

- ECCE Jobs
- Childcarefinder.ie
- Early Childhood Ireland
- Facebook

Storage of Records relating to the recruitment process are kept in line with Nera requirements.

Equal Opportunities

Selection of applicants is based on the applicants having the relevant qualifications, skills, competencies and experience to meet the requirements of the post, without bias on grounds of gender, marital or family status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, race or membership of the Traveller community (Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004). Positions are open to all suitably qualified applicants who satisfy the educational and experience selection criteria relevant to each specific post. Applicants who meet the selection criteria have equal access to the selection process.

The Interview Process

The interview for Grovelands Childcare is carried out by a panel of the Senior Management Team.

Vetting Requirements

Childcare Settings are required to have all employees vetted through the garda vetting process. This Identification Verification form must be completed by the owner/manager of the centre. The manager must verify two pieces of identification verifying that the new employee is the person they claim to be. This must be verified by checking a photo I.D., for example a passport and proof of current address such as a utility bill. A list of accepted identification is provided on the form. This form must be signed and dated by the owner/manager and include their membership number for Early Childhood Ireland. Parents/guardians who go on occasional outings and/or who work in a supportive role with the service are not required to be vetted as they will not have unsupervised access to children other than their own.

Qualification Requirements

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) has published a list of qualifications that meet the regulatory requirements for working in the Early Years sector in Ireland. From 31st December 2016, all ECCE room leaders must hold a full QQI level 6 as a minimum and ALL staff working in childcare must hold a minimum of QQI Level 5

Validating Documents

References

Qualifications

Acceptable forms of confirmation of Identity

Prior to an appointee taking up any post their identity must be confirmed against some statutory documentation (such as a passport, driver's licence, public services card or ID card), which gives their full name, address, signature and photograph. A copy of the ID will be kept on file.

Probation Periods

The first 6 months for staff members at Grovelands Childcare is regarded as a Probationary Period. However, management reserve the right to extend the probationary period for a further 6 months should we deem it necessary. Staff undergo appraisals at regular intervals during this period.

Induction Programmes for New Employees

It is important in order to ensure that the high standard of quality is met that new employees have an in-depth induction into the practices, policies and procedures of Grovelands Childcare. It ensures that new employees are aware of the children, the parents, routines of the room, methods of communication, the Grovelands Childcare programme and curriculum, child protection policy, first aid and fire safety measures, management structure, the ethos of Grovelands Childcare, contracts of employment and administrative procedures. New employees are requested to sign off the induction when they have completed each stage of the process. Managers or the designated person in charge will also sign off on these Induction forms.

Students

It is Grovelands Childcare policy to assist students in developing their skills in childcare. Students will work closely with staff to develop a professional and play-based child-centred approach to working with children. Students will have an opportunity to take part in monthly team meetings and work alongside the staff in implementing the curriculum.

Grovelands Childcare reserves the right to cease any students work experience if any concerns or issues arise

Students are required to:

- Be over 16 years of age
- Fill out and have garda vetting returned before work experience begins
- Meet with the student supervisor
- Provide 4 passport photos
- Provide photo ID
- Provide 2 references – one of which can be from a previous employer or college tutor
- Wear black trousers, black shoes and a white polo neck t-shirt
- Have an insurance letter from the college
- Provide us with a college acceptance letter with dates required of work experience
- Complete induction with Student Supervisor and fill out relevant paperwork
- Request parent permission forms to be signed before any observations are completed
- Abide by Grovelands Childcare Policies and Procedure
- Ensure they are never unattended with any children
- Sit with children and engage in play



Risk Management Policy

At Grovelands Childcare, we are committed to safeguarding children, staff, parents and all visitors to our centres. To provide a safe environment both indoors and outdoors for children, staff and visitors we have up to date Policies and Procedures in place. The Risk Management Policy principle is underwritten by the 1991 Childcare Act (Early Years Services) Preschool Regulations 2016 and the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act (2005)

The Risk Management Process

A designated member of staff is responsible for carrying out a daily Site Safety check to ensure there is no risk to children Outdoors, along with the outdoor check there is monthly Kerb Appeals that team leaders fill out to ensure the health and safety of the Indoor Environments. All staff have a duty to report anything that might be a potential risk or concern to the centre manager immediately.

If an incident does occur, the manager or designated person in charge will look at the relevant risk assessments, safety statement, procedures and work practices to make sure good practise was adhered to. They will report any concerns to Senior Management.

Identifying the Hazard or Risk

The Outdoor Site Safety check & the Kerb Appeals is a check list carried out to try avoid any potential risks in both the Indoor and Outdoor Environment.

The Indoor Team Leaders Kerb Appeals list checks the following:

- that the toys are in good condition and disinfected
- there are no spills on the floor
- all rooms are in order and set up for the next day
- Dolls clothes and dress up is washed monthly
- Mats are hoovered and free of frayed edges
- Sleeping children have separate boxes for individual blankets that are washed weekly
- Counter top and shelving is cleared regularly of all clutter
- Books are tidied and in good condition in Library areas
- Radiators, storage heaters and air conditioning vents are regularly washed down and clear of marks
- Chairs and table legs/ tops checked to ensure they are not loose and are cleaned weekly
- Shelving moved and hoovered underneath
- Door handles cleaned
- Sand trays and water trays checked for sharp edges
- Children encouraged to tidy up areas before leaving them
- Cleaning sheets completed for each room
- Spray bottles have correct contents and are labelled
- Correct colour coded mops and cloths are used in the rooms and washed after use.
- Presses under sinks are free of clutter
- Table Cloths clean

The Outdoor Site Safety Check list checks the following:

- No poisonous plants, vermin or disease bearing animals
- Bins are covered
- No smoking in creche or around grounds
- No precariously placed small, sharp or otherwise hazardous objects
- Plastic bags are safely used
- Safe guards are in place to prevent children from entering unsupervised or hazardous areas
- Vermin control is safe and out of reach of children
- Outdoor equipment is maintained and checked
- Daily procedures are in place to ensure area is free from litter, sharp objects or animal waste
- Traffic safety is assured
- Staff plan to ensure no crowding & adequate supervision
- Play Equipment is maintained with no sharp edges, splinters or rust
- Sufficient developmentally appropriate play experiences are available for the children
- No entrapment spaces between 3 & 6 inches
- No pinch or crush points on equipment
- Fences and Barriers stop access to hazardous areas & keep animals out
- No stagnant pools of water
- All surfaces are swept and kept clean
- Sun Screens are used and shade is available
- Pick up and drop off points are safe
- All safety procedures are followed on walks or field trips

A list of known Hazards is also stored in the Site Safety to ensure staff area aware and supervise these areas correctly.

If a risk has been identified or brought to the attention of the manager or the designated person in charge the manager will consider what the existing control measures the centre has in place and whether they are sufficient to address the risk.

The manager will then identify whether these existing control measures are enough to lower the risk to the lowest possible level. Following this the manager will rate the risk to check the possibility of it happening again and report it to Senior Management. Controls will be put in place to lower the risk to staff, children or visitors or remove what was the Potential Hazard.

The health, welfare and development of each child attending is supported and the safety of the children under our care is paramount. Each Grovelands Childcare Centre is set out to be safe, suitable and appropriate for the care and education of the children

Risk Assessment for an Individual Child with Additional Needs

If a child has an additional need, a risk assessment will be completed in the environment the child will be in. The risk assessment will review what furniture or obstacles in the area may pose a risk to the child.

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It is important that all relevant parties, are involved with this Risk assessment. The manager will ensure that the parents, the key worker and any other relevant body/agencies will complete this risk assessment together.

Risk assessments for Outings

The manager or designated person in charge will assemble a risk assessment before any children complete an outing with Grovelands Childcare. They will identify any hazards or potential risks and will go through the risk assessment with staff before the outing takes place. The managers or designated person in charge will print out the risk assessment to be completed by staff during the outing to ensure the safety of all staff, children and parents or volunteers. It will take into account our Outings Policy and Child Protection Policy.

Critical Incident Plan

A Childcare Facility, by its very nature, produces many crises in the course of caring for children. Thankfully, most of these are minor and can be dealt with adequately by our childcare professionals following Grovelands Childcare Policies and Procedures. However, occasionally, an incident occurs, which is termed “critical” and which cannot be dealt with in the normal way. All partners in the childcare community – staff, students, parents and members of the wider community, are likely to be seriously affected by it. Such a crisis must be managed in order to provide a sense of continuity and order, while at the same time providing maximum care for all affected parties.

Each Grovelands Childcare Centre has a Critical Incident Plan Document in the Parents area that is available for Parents and staff to go through.

The aim of this Critical Incident plan is to provide guidance to management and staff of childcare services on the prevention of and effective response to a critical incident. The purpose of this plan is to facilitate individual childcare services to:

- minimize the risks of a critical incident occurring;
- have an effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur;
- identify appropriate support and counselling structures in the event of an incident;
- identify and implement appropriate training and information resources for staff.

Risk Assessment for Covid-19

In accordance with government guidelines, Grovelands Childcare has carried out an assessment of potential risks that could cause the spread of covid-19 to a child/staff member/visitor while attending the service or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below:

Risk Identified	Policies and/or Procedures in place to Control or Manage the Risk
<p>Staff/ Visitors or Parents are not adhering to the guidelines of Social Distancing (2 meters)</p>	<p>A Social Distancing Policy is in place for staff, visitors and parents</p> <p>Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the importance of staff adhering to the 2-meter recommendations of social distancing</p> <p>Introduction of child friendly protective screens at entrances to allow staff to communicate with parents</p> <p>Covid-19 Designated persons on the premises ensures that staff and visitors are adhering to this policy. Any breaches are reported to Senior Management</p>
<p>Monitor and Review</p>	<p>The above Policies are reviewed Annually</p> <p>The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff</p>
<p>Staff are not using the correct hand washing procedure and are not leading by example to children</p>	<p>Hand washing procedure in place</p> <p>Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the importance of the correct hand washing procedure and the guidelines to support children through song and fun.</p> <p>Hand washing procedures posters are displayed near sink areas for both children and staff</p> <p>Covid-19 Designated persons on the premises ensures that staff and visitors are adhering to this policy. Any breaches are reported to Senior Management</p>
<p>Monitor and Review</p>	<p>The above Policies are reviewed Annually</p> <p>The Covid-19 Designated person will routinely observe hand washing procedures</p>
<p>Staff are leaving the premises at lunch times and wearing their uniform to the shop which may lead to the spread of infection</p>	<p>Strict uniform Policy in place</p> <p>Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the guidelines to reduce infection by washing their uniform daily at the highest temperature the material can withstand.</p> <p>Staff were informed that uniforms are to be brought into the centre and staff are to change on the premises.</p> <p>Staff leaving the premises for lunch times or at the end of their shift are to change out of uniform</p>

	Covid-19 Designated persons on the premises ensures that staff and visitors are adhering to this policy. Any breaches are reported to Senior Management
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff
A staff member is sneezing and not adhering to the respiratory hygiene controls policy	Policy on Respiratory Hygiene Controls Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the importance of adhering to the respiratory hygiene controls policy Hand washing procedures are to be followed after coughing or sneezing Tissues are readily available in rooms Covid-19 Designated persons on the premises ensures that staff and visitors are adhering to this policy. Any breaches are reported to Senior Management
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
A child becomes unresponsive and requires first aid during the covid-19 pandemic	First Aid station includes a face mask in the event mouth to mouth is needed The centre has a first response person who ensures there is a stock of equipment readily available in the isolation areas Each centre has a person qualified and up to date with the First Aid Responder (FAR) training and these people are listed in areas throughout the service List of Emergency services numbers are beside the phone in reception areas The designated Covid-19 person ensures to do a monthly routine check of isolation areas to ensure it is fully stocked
Monitor and Review	The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff
A child is showing signs and symptoms of Covid-19 on the premises	A Management of Covid-19 Policy in place Induction Policy and Response Plan – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction and response plan training to ensure they fully understood what to do in the event that a child or staff member shows signs of covid-19 in the workplace Parents contact details up to date in the centre Staff next of kin details up to date in the service A First Response person allocated in each service who will bring the staff member/ child to isolation area as per policy Critical Incident Plan in all rooms informing staff of the steps to take in this event

	Designated covid-19 person on the premises to ensure that the policies are adhered to.
Monitor and Review	The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff
Staff member has been in close contact with someone who has contracted Covid-19	<p>Contact Tracing and Notification of Covid-19 outbreaks policy in place</p> <p>Staff must adhere to the 14 days isolation guidelines to ensure they are not showing signs of covid-19</p> <p>Induction training provided for staff before they returned to the centre, that informed staff that if they are in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed as positive for Covid-19 that they must immediately notify the Designated covid-19 person on the premises.</p>
Monitor and Review	The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff
Two children are sharing the same cot/ rest bed	<p>Sleep/Rest included into the Covid-19 Policy</p> <p>Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the importance of the strict cleaning measures the situation where a cot/rest bed is used between two children at different times. Staff were also informed that children are to have individual sheets and bed linen and staff are to be vigilant in the safe removal and laundering of soiled linen and the appropriate storage of clean bed linen. As per policy all laundry is to be washed at the highest temperature that the fabric can tolerate.</p> <p>All cots, mattresses and rest beds are to be cleaned and disinfected daily and also if visibly soiled throughout the daily.</p> <p>Covid-19 Designated persons on the premises ensures that staff and visitors are adhering to this policy. Any breaches are reported to Senior Management</p>
Monitor and Review	The above Policies are reviewed Annually
Children using the toilet and staff are unsure if they have correctly washed their hands	<p>Supervising Children’s handwashing techniques policy in place.</p> <p>Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the importance of supporting and supervising children while they use the toilet areas and wash their hands. The use of songs and poems can make this experience fun.</p> <p>Covid-19 Designated persons on the premises ensures that staff and visitors are adhering to this policy. Any breaches are reported to Senior Management</p>
Monitor and Review	This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis
Children are not separated outdoors and there is a risk of infection	<p>Outdoors in included in the Covid-19 policy</p> <p>Induction Policy – All staff returning to the centre were given Induction Training that included the importance of outdoor play and how the outdoor area use must be staggered. It also explained that two or more play pods can play outdoors at the same time once they are in different areas. Separator fencing can be used to separate the garden into different areas.</p>

	<p>Fixed play Equipment in the outdoors should be cleaned and disinfected after each group uses the area and a written record kept. Hand washing must be adhered too on re-entering the premises.</p> <p>Designated covid-19 person on the premises to ensure that the policies are adhered to.</p>
Monitor and Review	The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff
Children are coming into the centre with dirty hands	<p>Infection Control Policy in place</p> <p>Parents are asked to wash children’s hands before leaving home and staff are informed to wash children’s hands once they enter the centre</p> <p>Video launched on Grovelands Childcare before reopening the centre by DCYA informing parents and children about hand washing before they leave home</p> <p>Staff are informed they have a duty of care and can report any breaches of policy to the designated covid-19 person in the centre who will review with senior management.</p>
Monitor and Review	The Covid-19 Response team will regularly update themselves with any changes to guidelines and inform staff



Safe Sleep Policy

The management of Grovelands Childcare recognise the importance of sleep and rest for all children in the centre. Children should be encouraged to sleep or rest when they grow regardless of their age. However, it is a normal stage of development that children grow out of sleeps (approx. 3 years of age) and children should never be forced to sleep. All Parents are required to sign our Sleep Policy if children are under 2 years of age.

The Sleep Positioning of Children

Staff follow the Safe Sleep Guidelines and place babies and young children in the following sleeping position:

- On their back
- Feet at Foot of Cot/Bed
- Head Uncovered

The Children's Sleep Environment

- All objects, toys and hanging items removed (clear cot)
- Overheating is avoided
- Bottle-prohibited
- Appropriate use of Soothers
- Each child is allocated their own bed linen on a weekly basis. Bed linen is washed weekly or more frequently if required. No children share bed linen
- Bed linen is changed on cots/beds as individual children require them
- Lighting is adjusted to ensure a relaxed environment for the children

How Children are supervised while sleeping

1. All children should be Supervised until they are asleep paying attention to any changes in sleep patterns
2. Any child who does not want to sleep should be returned to a play room until a letter stage when they are more tired
3. An appointed staff member will be responsible for physical sleep checks
4. The appointed staff member must ensure the sleep room is well ventilated and have sufficient heat (between 16° - 20°). Windows should be opened where possible and weather permitting to ensure fresh air to circulate.
5. The appointed staff member should ensure children have appropriate clothing (no strings, bibs, ribbons, hoods). Babies clothes are loose not tight.
6. Amber beads, necklaces and cultural jewellery are not permitted to be worn by children.
7. Babies are placed according to our policy in a cot to sleep as this is the safest place.
8. Physical Sleep Checks are carried out every 10minutes, staff member ensures children/babies are not getting too hot during sleep
9. The Sleep Log is usually displayed outside the Sleep Room Doors or on a clip board in the area.
10. The appointed member of staff fills out a sleep record log after each physical check detailing:
 - The time of the check

- Who carried out the check
- Sleep position of each child
- Skin colour of each child
- Breathing pattern of each child
- The Room Temperature – check off wall mounted thermometer

They also ensure that no child's/babies heads are covered by blankets.

11. The appointed member of staff is aware of health and safety and takes note of any equipment in the sleep room that may need attention and reports this to the manager.
12. The cords on blinds must be checked to make sure they are secure and out of reach of the children.
13. Cots and beds are not positioned close to curtains, tie backs, cords or other items that may pose a risk to child's safety.

The Use of Viewing panels/Listening devices

Our Sleep Rooms are all available on CCTV and can be supervised between the 10 Minute Physical Checks. This allows the staff to safely monitor the sleeping children and to see if any children wake between the 10-minute Physical checks.

The Sleep Facilities for Children

Under 2 years

The Children aged under 2 years of age are provided with a separate Sleep Room. The sleep Room contains Cots and rest beds that meet safety standards.

Parents with children in our Baby Area should provide a grow-bag suitable for their age. This should be left in the centre for the duration of their child's attendance. Cellular blankets are required for all children under 2 years of age that are not using grow-bags.

The children in the Bluebell and Mulberry rooms have their individual needs met where sleep routines are concerned. Any observed change in a child's sleep or rest pattern or where a child will be transitioning will be discussed with the parent before changes are made.

Where sleep and rest is concerned, the child's age and stage of development is taken into account and regular risk assessments take place as children become more active. As stated, any changes will be discussed and agreed with parents.

Over 2 Years

Children under 3 years of age have their own set sleep times depending on routines. Key Workers will speak with parents if they feel their child is growing out of sleeps in the centre.

Older Children who attend Full day (3 years +) are encouraged to have a quiet relaxation time sitting or lying on beds/mats with a book and soft music. Older children may take part in relaxing, calming activities such as Yoga. This supports children's well-being, concentration and co-ordination.

Parent Permissions for Sleep

Parents are requested to sign the below permissions form in relation to the Sleep & Rest Policy

I acknowledge that staff have met and discussed with me that my child (insert name) _____ is ready to transition from a cot to a rest bed. I am fully aware of the safe sleep guidelines and the safety measures in place.

Signed: _____ (Parent) Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Centre Manager)

Suitable Clothing for Sleeps

Children should have suitable clothing for sleeps.
Staff will ensure to remove clothing or items with:

- strings
- Bibs
- bobbins
- hoods
- ribbons
- Shoes

Where required clothing of younger babies and toddlers will be removed to avoid overheating.

Amber Beads, Necklaces and Cultural Jewellery

Grovelands Childcare respects the views and cultures of all parents and families in their setting. However, all cultural Jewellery, Amber beads or chains are not permitted to be worn by children due to potential choking, inhalation or circulation hazards. We will work with parents to raise awareness of regulations while ensuring cultures are celebrated in other ways in the centre.



Ratios Policy

Maintaining Adult-to-Child Ratios

Grovelands Childcare ensures that all staff are aware of the correct ratios of children to staff as set out in the Túsła Regulations. Below the ratios are listed:

Age range of Children	Number of Children to Staff
0-1 year	3:1
1-2 years	5:1
2-3 years	6:1
3 years plus full day care	8:1
ECCE Sessions	11:1
After School	12:1

Managers or the designated person in charge is responsible for ensuring that the Correct ratios are adhered to at all times. Children are divided by age and/or ability into rooms to further meet the ratio requirements. As we are required by regulation to meet the above ratios it may be necessary on occasion for your child to attend another room within the centre.



Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Policy

Grovelands Childcare uses the internet, photographic and recording devices to support the provision of a quality service for children and families.

CCTV

The purpose of this policy is to state how Grovelands Childcare deals with the requirements of the law, particularly the Data Protection Act 1998, in respect of our use of the Closed Circuit T.V. system in the Centre.

Grovelands Childcare Centres operates Close Circuit Television Systems (CCTV). The purpose of the surveillance system is to assist the centres achieve its security objectives of ensuring the personal safety and protection of children, staff, parents and visitors to the centre. The data Controllers in each of the centres are the manager and the Directors. They are responsible for the data/information collected by CCTV. New employees will be informed immediately, at induction that a surveillance system is in operation. Parents will be informed when they enrol their child. They will be informed of the purpose of the CCTV and what it can and cannot be used to monitor.

CCTV is in place for the protection of the staff, visitors and children of Grovelands Childcare, they are not for the use of public or parental viewing. Recordings will however be provided, if required by law or authorised agencies such as the Garda or from prior agreement of the directors. Information will remain on the hard drive of the system and will be recorded over when the memory is full – memory will usually start to rerecord every 30 days.

The Following areas are monitored by our CCTV Cameras:

- Entrance
- Sunflower Room
- Primrose Room
- Bluebell Room
- Mulberry Room
- Sycamore Room
- Cedar Room
- Maple Room
- Willow Room
- Chestnut Room
- Outdoor Garden Areas
- Front of House

Multi-Media

Grovelands Childcare is aware that future in communication is very much multimedia based. We encourage the use of computers for the children, as it is reality that their use is part of their future and is used in education all over the world.

The centres will host a DVD Day once per month where the children can bring in a DVD from home. The children will be allowed to watch DVD's only on these days but will not

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exceed 1.5hrs viewing time. All DVD's must be age appropriate. Grovelands Childcare encourages parents to be aware and educated on the use of Screen time when at home as this can often affect anti-social behaviours. The DVD day will only apply to full day care rooms.

Use of the Internet

If children are accessing the internet we will ensure:

- They will be accompanied by a staff member at all times
- All use of the internet is developmentally appropriate
- All sites viewed will be educationally beneficial
- There will be set limits around the time spent on computers
- All parents will be consulted for their opinions and advice where their child is concerned

Photographs & Videos

Photographs and Video Footage is taken to demonstrate children's learning and for documentation purposes. These are often displayed in the children's rooms and in Journey and Aistear Books. Photographs and Videos will also be made available on our Facebook page and website. In some cases, photographs or Videos may be used for advertising purposes. Only children whose parents have signed the permission form for photos will be used in these photographs.

From time to time other outside training bodies/ agencies may request to take video footage of quality activities or the day-to-day running of the centre. Grovelands Childcare will ensure to get written permission off parents for these Individual Recordings.

Tablets

Tablets will be used in rooms to take Photo Evidence of Activities and to demonstrate children's learning. These tablets will also be used as a parent link to the centres and will become a 2-way communication device that can send daily reports to parents. They will track daily records such as attendance, sleep records and the daily food intake of each individual child.



Social Media Management Policy

Statement of Intent

At Grovelands Childcare, we respect the privacy of children and their families, staff and volunteers. All information relating to children and their families, staff and volunteers will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Procedures

Information:

Social media sites e.g. Facebook, service website or twitter is used for sharing information relating to the childcare service. This will include photographs, videos/media packages, childcare related news posts, child activity updates e.g. sample plans and sample learning stories, fundraising and local childcare initiatives. The social media site will used as an extension of the early childhood services form of communication and will not be used for personal communication for staff, committee or parents.

Administration:

- The social media site is set up with 2 administrators to approve and monitor activity on the social media site.
- All posts are verified in advance of being placed on the social media site by parents.
- All inappropriate posts are removed from the social media site and the user will be reported and blocked from the site.

Communication:

- The service does not use the social media site as a replacement of already established communication methods with parents.
- The social media site is a tool used for updates and sharing relevant information with parents.
- The social media site is an extension of the early childhood services form of communication; it is not used for personal communication for staff, committee or parents.

Images, videos/media packages:

- Images of individual or groups of children are not uploaded to the site without prior permission from parents.



Covid -19 Response Plan and Policy

Policy Statement

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as an employer to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This policy will be signed and dated by the managing director and brought to the attention of our managers, supervisors, parents and staff. Please note that this Covid-19 Policy does not replace existing health and safety regulations or other legal obligations for early year's childcare providers.

It is intended to support our existing infection prevention and control guidance by providing information around specific concerns relating to COVID-19. It should offer guidance to our employees and the parents of our centres and provide reassurance that we are taking all the necessary safety steps to operate safely in the current environment. It is important that all parties have a clear understanding of the benefits and risks of childcare and that it is not possible to guarantee that infection can be prevented in any setting either in a childcare centre, school or in a home.

It is important that Grovelands Childcare provide a nurturing, caring, educational environment along with taking the necessary safety pre-cautions as outlined in this Policy. A heightened awareness by staff and parents in order to protect one another along with a clear knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of covid-19 is required.

The manager of each service will be the Designated Covid-19 person. They are responsible for ensuring that Covid-19 measures are strictly adhered to in the centres. In absence of the manager the supervisor or delegated person in charge will take on this responsibility. They will be the Covid-19 Designated Person. It is important that all managers, supervisors & delegated persons in charge know and understand what is expected in this regard and training will be provided prior to the re-opening of our centres. Ongoing support will be available from the senior management team.

This plan is a live working document and it will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amended to take into account new guidance from the Health and Safety Authority www.hsa.ie www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie

Grovelands Childcare Covid-19 Response Plan and policy was drawn up in line with the 'Return to Work Safely' Protocol.

To ensure that Grovelands Childcare is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for staff and customers, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan.

All managers, supervisors and staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our workers
- provide up to date information to our workers on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- provide an adequate number of trained Covid-19 Representatives who are easily identifiable and put in place a reporting system
- inform all staff of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the workplace to facilitate physical distancing
- keep a log of contact / group work to help with contact tracing
- have all workers attend an induction / familiarisation briefing

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- develop a procedure to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or in the workplace
- provide instructions for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work
- intensify cleaning in line with government advice

Signed Director of Grovelands Childcare: _____

Date: _____

What is Covid-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. Severe illness is much less common in children and young adults in good health. Symptoms include fever (high temperature), cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol-based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). It can also be spread through touch on surfaces or objects that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on, and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes without having washed your hands thoroughly.

The virus that causes COVID-19 does not spread through the air over long distances (it is not airborne). This means that being in the same big room or in the same outside play area does not spread infection unless people are very close to each other or are touching the same things.

At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments

As COVID-19 is a new illness, we are still learning about how easily the virus spreads from person to person and how to control it, so it is important to keep up to date and make sure you are using the most up to date guidance available. This information is available from the following:

- HSE-HPSC: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>
- HSE Hub: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
- Department of Health: <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/7e0924-latest-updates-on-covid-19-coronavirus/>

When a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 the HSE works to identify people that the person was in close contact with since they got symptoms and for the 2 days before they got symptoms. People identified as close contacts are at a higher risk of developing infection. They are asked to self-isolate for 14 days and are offered testing even if they do not develop symptoms

Raising Awareness of Covid-19

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and of the symptoms.
- Advise staff members that are ill not to attend work and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise parents not to present their children for childcare if the child has symptoms of a viral respiratory infection or if there is someone in the household suspected or known to have COVID-19.
- Staff members are not to present for work if they have been identified as a Contact of a person with COVID-19.
- Advise staff members that develop symptoms at work to bring this to the attention of their manager promptly and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Promote good hand and respiratory hygiene as a staff member and display posters throughout the facility.

Signs and Symptoms of Covid-19

People with symptoms of infection are very important in spread of the disease. Signs and symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may appear two to 14 days after exposure. This time after exposure and before having symptoms is called the incubation period. Infection can also spread from people in the day or two before they get symptoms and it can spread from some people who get an infection but have no symptoms or such mild symptoms that they take little notice of them (asymptomatic spread).

Common signs and symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Tiredness

Other symptoms can include:

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- Chest pain

This list is not all inclusive. Other less common symptoms have been reported, such as rash, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Children have similar symptoms to adults and generally have mild illness. The severity of COVID-19 symptoms can range from very mild to severe. Some people may have only a few symptoms, and some people may have no symptoms at all. People who are older or who have existing chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, lung disease, asthma, diabetes, severe obesity, chronic kidney or liver disease, or who have compromised immune systems may be at higher risk of serious illness. This is similar to what is seen with other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza.

Some people may experience worsened symptoms, such as worsened shortness of breath and pneumonia, about a week after symptoms start.

People are no longer infectious for other people 14 days after they have developed symptoms.

Testing for COVID-19 is based on taking a sample from the back of the nose and throat and examining if for virus genes in the laboratory.

When to see a doctor

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or you've been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, contact your doctor or clinic right away for medical advice. Tell your health care team about your symptoms and possible exposure before you go to your appointment. If people have symptoms, they should self-isolate as quickly as possible. Their doctor will arrange testing for them if they need a test.

If you have emergency COVID-19 signs and symptoms, seek care immediately. Emergency signs and symptoms can include:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure
- Inability to stay awake
- New confusion
- Blue lips or face

If you have signs or symptoms of COVID-19, contact your doctor or clinic for guidance. Let your doctor know if you have other chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease or lung disease.

If any staff member, child or parent is showing any of the above signs or symptoms of Covid-19 they are required to self-isolate at home and contact their GP. It is important that they keep in close contact with the management team and update them on their condition. They should NOT under any circumstances be near the premises.

The Covid-19 Response Team

The Covid-19 Response team in Grovelands Childcare will consist of the following:

- Covid-19 Designated person
- First Response Persons
- Senior Management Team
- Directors
- Site Safety Officer

The Role of the Covid-19 Designated Person

In preparing for the reopening of premises, each centre will appoint at least one lead staff member to undertake the role of assisting the employer to implement and monitor the necessary safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID19 as identified in the Return to Work Safely Protocol.

The COVID19 Designated Person will

- be clearly identifiable in the workplace
- receive the necessary training by their employer.
- report to Management regarding adherence to safety measures
- monitoring of behaviours and discipline of breaches
- will be supported by others, for example the COVID19 Response Team

Support from the Response Team

- Openly support the COVID19 Designation Person in their role throughout the organization
- Provide any necessary training to support the person in their role
- Have regular and meaningful engagement with their COVID19 Designated Person
- Work together with the COVID19 Team and all staff to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Structure of role:

In their role, the Designated Person will be provided with a structured framework to include:

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- Coordinating the response of the organization to COVID19 to all staff
- Provide timely information to the team on revised guidelines from Government Departments
- Agree on frequency of updates – daily, or a set number of times per week for both the response team and for general communication updates to staff.
- Communicating with all staff on safety measure and ensuring adherence
- Reporting to Management regarding risk assessment reviews and actions for updates
- Monitoring of behaviours and discipline of breaches of safety measures.

The Covid-19 Designated person on this premises is:

The Deputy Covid-19 Designated person on this premises is:

They will take on the role of the Covid-19 Designated person in their absence.

The Role of the First Response Person

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in protecting the child/staff member involved, their colleagues, parents or others at the workplace. While staff and children should not attend Grovelands Childcare if they are unwell, we are advised to have a plan in place in the event that a child/staff member (or other person) becomes unwell and/or displays symptoms of COVID19 and identify who will be responsible for looking after that person until they leave the centre.

From the moment a person presents / complains of feeling unwell, they are to be referred to the First Response Person who will take charge and follow the correct process.

The role of the First Response Person is:

- If a child/staff member develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, or shortness of breath while in the care facility, the first Response person will need to take them to the place that is planned for isolation. This should be a room if possible but if that is not possible it should be in a place 2m away from others in the room.
- The First Response Person caring for a child/staff member waiting for pick-up will need to be prepared to have contact with the child as necessary. The first response person should wear a mask. Staff members may prefer to wear gloves in this situation although they are not strictly necessary as the virus does not pass through skin. Whether gloves are worn or not it is essential to avoid touching your own nose, mouth or eyes while caring for a symptomatic child and to perform hand hygiene. If gloves are used, you must perform hand hygiene immediately after removal and safe disposal of gloves.
- In an emergency, call the ambulance, and explain that the child or staff member is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- The room will need to be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected once they leave.
- If the child/staff member needs to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available and it needs to be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected before use by others.
- Inform relevant bodies
- Risk assess the entire incident from moment of presentation to after all the cleaning has been finished.

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- Review the process and inform staff of any changes going forward.
- Where CPR is required and Social Distancing cannot be followed by the First Response Person, Grovelands Childcare recommends the use of CPR masks. These are stored in main First Aid stations in each of the centres.
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of PPE gear in the isolated area.

What is required to be in the isolation area:

- Disposable Gloves
- Masks
- Bin bags
- Sanitizer
- Tissues
- Bottled Water
- Disinfectant spray and disposable tissues
- Thermometer to be brought to area to record temperatures in the case of an incident

The First response person on this premises is:

The Deputy First Response person on this premises is:

They will take on the role of the First Response person in their absence.

The Role of the HAS and Inspections

The Health and Safety Authority is vested with national responsibility for occupational health and safety in the workplace and will be the lead State body in the oversight and enforcement of the COVID-19 'Return to Work Safely' Protocol. The HSA takes its powers from the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The HSA has the power under the 2005 Act, to advise, offer guidance. Monitor, inspect and/or enforce adherence to COVID-19 measures within a place of work as defined under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

As part of its Occupational Safety and Health inspection programme, HSA Inspectors will provide advice and support to employers and employees on how they are implementing the COVID-19 measures in the workplace, based on the 'Return to Work Safely' Protocol. The Inspectors can address and advise on any shortcomings in relation to the COVID-19 measures in the Protocol through a Report of Inspection which is left with the employer at the end of the visit. Can include timelines/follow-ups as needed. The Inspector can take the appropriate enforcement action under the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005 and associated regulations. Enforcement action includes an Improvement Notice (IN) or Prohibition Notice (PN). If following inspection, the inspector forms the opinion that further action is required the appropriate action, including the closure of a workplace,

will be taken using the relevant powers. All other Government appropriate officials will work with the HSA to oversee compliance with the Protocol.

Physical/Social Distancing Measures

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise the risk of transmission is 2 meters.

We understand that it is not possible to observe physical distancing from a young child you are caring for and it is not practical to enforce physical distancing between young children who are cared for as a group. In the context of childcare this is relevant to distancing between adults.

There are certain steps that will be implemented to maintain physical distancing wherever possible:

- Distancing Guidance markers will be placed outside the service where possible. Children will be brought straight to their specific care room on arrival.
- Castle entrance screens to allow children to enter the premises without the need for a parent to be on the premises. These screens allow for the protection of staff/ parent whilst also supporting the need for daily communications.
- Staff from different 'play-pods' should maintain social distancing (2 metres). Where two staff are part of one pod, they should social distance as far as is practicable.
- Fire evacuation should be carried out per room rather than the entire building during the period of COVID-19.
- Drop off and collection protocols will be in place that minimise adult to adult contact
- Strict avoidance of handshakes, hugs and physical contact between colleagues must be maintained.
- Managers will stagger the use of staff rooms or other communal facilities to try to avoid crowding.
- Different pods will not share toys and should where possible have separate breaks and meals times or separate areas at break and meal times.
- Managers will manage entry and exiting to avoid close contact in doors and hallways between children and adults from different pods
- Where possible meetings and training sessions will be conducted through virtual conferencing or ensuring the required social distancing of 2 meters is adhered to.
- Where face to face meetings are absolutely necessary, the length of the meeting and numbers attending will be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Staff are encouraged not to travel to and from work together – use your own cars or public transport.
- Staff must not share pens, cups, plates, and cutlery and should have these items for their own personal use.
- Staff are asked to minimise the number of personal items they bring to work with them.
- One person per family is required for drop off's and collections to minimise the amount of people in the entrance areas.
- Staff are to avoid mixing of groups (for example circle time) and use of communal areas or shared spaces such as dining rooms, multi-purpose rooms, reception areas or sensory rooms.
- With external deliveries, practices are put in place to ensure that delivery staff remain outside the premises and adhere to social distancing and good infection control practices.
- Maintenance or external contractors (to include cleaning staff) will be brought in out of hours where feasible.

It is the responsibility of individual staff to ensure that they are keeping the recommended distance of 2 meters from one another where possible. Staff are also asked to remind other staff members if they feel that they are not adhering to this advice.

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

Sleeping cots should be arranged to so that there is physical distance between groups of cots for children from different pods. Physical distance between cots from children in the same pod is not likely to be important if the children interact with each other when playing.

Managing Covid-19 in the service

The action to be taken should a child or staff member be diagnosed or suspected of having COVID-19:

- All individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 should contact their GP for further advice.
- If the doctor arranges testing for them, they (or their parent) will be contacted by Public Health to identify anyone who has been in contact with them during the period when they were likely to have been infectious.
- The childcare setting will then be contacted by local Public Health staff of the HSE to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- An assessment of each childcare setting where this may occur will be undertaken by HSE public health staff.
- Advice on the management of children and staff who came into contact with the case will be based on this assessment.
- The HSE Public Health staff will also be in contact individually with anyone who has been in contact with the case to provide them with appropriate advice.
- cleaning of communal areas such as classrooms, changing rooms and toilets
- Symptomatic people should self-isolate and arrange to get tested for COVID-19.
- Confirmed COVID-19 cases should continue to self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days and should not return to the childcare setting until they are advised that it is safe to do so.

- Close contacts of a confirmed case should go home and restrict their movements for 14 days. They should not attend the childcare facility during that time. They will be offered testing for COVID-19 and will need to stay away from the childcare centre for 14 days even if the virus is not detected on the tests. This is because some people who are infected do not have a positive test at the time the test was taken.
- Gather up the contact log information for the child/adult involved for contact tracing if required

The action to be taken should a child, or a staff member displays symptoms whilst in the service

- If a staff member/ child is showing any signs of Covid-19 on entrance, they will not be allowed to attend the service
- If a child develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, or shortness of breath while in the care facility, the first Response person will need to take them to the place that is planned for isolation. This should be a room if possible but if that is not possible it should be in a place 2m away from others in the room.
- Call their parent or guardian and ask them to collect their child as soon as possible
- Remember the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so the physical separation is enough to reduce risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room.
- The First Response Person caring for a child waiting for pick-up will need to be prepared to have contact with the child as necessary. The first response person should wear a mask. Staff members may prefer to wear gloves in this situation although they are not strictly necessary as the virus does not pass through skin. Whether gloves are worn or not it is essential to avoid touching your own nose, mouth or eyes while caring for a symptomatic child and to perform hand hygiene. If gloves are used, you must perform hand hygiene immediately after removal and safe disposal of gloves.
- Use of an infrared non-contact thermometer is recommended. Staff should keep record log of temperatures taken in a suspected case
- If a staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath while in the care facility ask them to go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They should remain 2 m away from others if possible.
- They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. If you don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- If they can tolerate doing so, they should wear a surgical mask.
- If they must wait, then they should do so in an office or other area away from others.
- If they need to use toilet facilities, they should wipe contact surfaces clean and clean their hands after attending the toilet.
- In an emergency, call the ambulance, and explain that the child or staff member is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- The room will need to be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected once they leave.
- If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available and it needs to be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected before use by others.
- Inform relevant bodies
- Ensure close contact with staff member/ parents of child to ensure you are receiving any updated information

The action to be taken should a child or staff member come into contact with a person with COVID-19

Parents and staff are informed that any child/staff member who is a close contact of a person who has a confirmed diagnosis or is suspected of having COVID-19 must not attend the service, and must remain at home in quarantine for 14 days.

Contact Tracing and Notification of a Covid-19 Outbreaks

If a person tests positive for coronavirus they will be asked about other people they have been in close contact with. A person may also get a call from a contact tracer if it is likely that they have coronavirus but have not yet had a test.

This is 'contact tracing'. The people who do this work are 'contact tracers'. Contact Tracers will determine the risk to other staff/children in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19.

Why is contact tracing needed?

Contact tracing identifies the people who need to be contacted. For example, family members, friends, colleagues or fellow travellers.

Contact tracing is carried out to determine who else is at risk of catching the virus.

Contact tracers will give advice on what to do if a person develops symptoms. This is done to try to reduce the spread of coronavirus in the community.

In the event that there is an outbreak of Covid-19, Grovelands Childcare is required to fill out the required Early Years Inspectorate Covid-19 Notification Form and send to ey.reception@tusla.ie

Waste Management

All personal waste, including used tissues and all cleaning waste, should be placed in a plastic rubbish bag.

The bag should be tied when it is almost full and then placed into a second bin bag and tied. Once the bag has been tied securely, it should be left somewhere safe.

Foot-operated bins should be available in all rooms and accessible to staff and children.

In the event of a suspected case or confirmed case of COVID-19 occurring at the service, the following waste management system is recommended:

- There is a supply of refuse bags available for the double bagging and disposal of contaminated waste to be used only if a case of COVID-19 is suspected in the service
- A designated area for the storage of possible contaminated COVID-19 waste for 3 days must be available after which time it can be placed with normal waste.

Cleaning

A clean environment is a safe environment!

Preventing the spread of the virus will be achieved by regular and effective cleaning.

Hygiene measures and cleaning regimes

- Where possible teach children how to clean their hands and about respiratory hygiene.
- Supply tissues and encourage children to use them.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers should be positioned safely to avoid risk of ingestion by young children.
- Ensure hand-washing facilities, including soap and disposable towels, are well maintained.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers should be readily available in every room and hand wash sinks should be within easy walking distance
- Soap should be neutral and non-perfumed to minimise risk of skin damage.

- The National Public Health Emergency Team recommends the use of cloth face coverings in certain indoor settings. It is generally not appropriate for childcare workers to apply this when caring for children but the guidance is applicable for interaction between adults when not caring for children.
- Provide bins for disposal of tissues and make sure they do not overflow.
- If disinfection of an area is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.
- reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are clean before re-use
- equipment such as mop buckets are emptied and cleaned with a fresh solution of disinfectant before re-use
- Bins are regularly emptied so they do not over-fill
- Increase the frequency and extent of cleaning regimes and ensure that they include:
 1. clean regularly touched objects and surfaces using a household cleaning product
 2. pay particular attention to high-contact areas such as door handles, grab rails/ hand rails in corridors/stairwells, plastic-coated or laminated worktops, desks, access touchpads, telephones/keyboards in offices, and toilets/taps/sanitary fittings.
 3. wear rubber gloves when cleaning surfaces, wash the gloves while still wearing them, then wash your hands after you take them off.

Cleaning Products used continue to be as follows:

General Cleaning = Washing up liquid and warm water

Sterilization = Milton using correct dilution

Disinfection = Dettol using correct dilution

All spray bottles are to be emptied at the end of the day and refilled each morning

The managers should delegate a staff member to complete this daily

Toilets

Disinfectant will be provided for staff to clean communal touch points such as door handles, taps, lock after each use

Cleaning rotas should be visible in all toilet areas - completed and signed as appropriate. These should be cleaned twice daily

Frequently touched Surfaces

- Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time, (Source NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide)
- These surfaces should be visibly clean at all times
- Cleaned at least twice a day, including;
 1. Table-tops and desks
 2. door handles and light switches
 3. toilets and toilet doors, taps
 4. remote controls
 5. kettles, coffee machines, toasters, microwave, fridge handles, water dispensers
 6. kitchen surfaces and cupboard handles
 7. Sanitizer/Hand towel dispensers

Selection and management of toys from an infection prevention viewpoint

In line with existing national guidance it is recommended to:

- Choose toys that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary) and dry.
- In the context of the pandemic, the use of certain types of toys (e.g. soft toys, stuffed toys, play dough) needs to be considered carefully. If their use is considered important for the children avoid sharing of items between children in so far as is practical.

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- Play dough should be replaced daily and soft toys should be washed regularly.
- If soft toys/comfort blankets are essential for some children they should be personal to the child, they should not be shared and they must be machine washable.
- Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that children are inclined to put in their mouths must be capable of being washed and disinfected.
- Discourage children from putting shared toys into their mouths.
- Store clean toys/equipment in a clean container or clean cupboard.
- Always follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions.
- Always wash your hands after handling contaminated toys and equipment.
- If groups or children are cared for in pods or if there are morning and afternoon groups in the same room avoid sharing of toys between groups to the greatest extent possible for example by having separate boxes of toys for each group.
- If separate toy boxes are not possible toys must be cleaned between use by different pods.

Cleaning of Toys

- All toys (including those not currently in use) should be cleaned on a regular basis, i.e. weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.
- Toys that are used by very young children should be washed daily.
- Toys that children put in their mouths should be washed after use or before use by another child.
- All toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or body fluids must be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal. Toys waiting to be cleaned must be stored separately.

Cleaning Procedure

- Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices.
- Rinse the toy in clean water.
- Thoroughly dry the toy.
- Hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.
- Toys that cannot be immersed in water i.e. electronic or wind up should be wiped with a clean damp cloth and dried.

Disinfection procedure

In some situations, toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning. For example:

- Toys/equipment that children will place in their mouths.
- Toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids.

During an outbreak of infection:

If disinfection is required:

- Use disinfectant and dilute as recommended
- Rinse and dry the item thoroughly.
- Note: Always follow the manufacturer's cleaning/disinfecting instructions and use recommended products to ensure effective usage and to ensure equipment is not damaged.

How to clean the childcare setting where there were children, or staff with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Droplets carrying the virus that causes COVID-19 can fall from the air on to surfaces such as table tops, toys, and other things that we touch. If people contaminate their hands while sneezing or coughing, they may contaminate surfaces by touching them. A person may become infected when they touch a contaminated object or surface and they then touch their own mouth, nose or eyes. For example, someone may touch a contaminated door handle and then rub their eyes or put something in their mouth. The virus cannot grow on surfaces but it can survive if they are not cleaned. The virus gradually dies off over time and under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any

contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours. Regular cleaning of frequently –touched hard surfaces and of hands will therefore help to reduce the risk of infection. Once a person with suspected COVID-19 is identified in a childcare setting all surfaces that the person has been in contact with should be cleaned and disinfected.

General tips for cleaning/disinfecting rooms where a child or staff member with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 was present

- Once the room is vacated, the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Disinfection only works reliably on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning never instead of cleaning.
- The person assigned to clean the area should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household or disposable single use non-sterile nitrile gloves and a disposable plastic apron (if one is available).
- Clean the environment and the furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection.
- Pay special attention to frequently touched flat surfaces, the backs of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces or items that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be put back into use.
- Carpets (if present) do not require special cleaning unless there has been a spillage however for ease of cleaning, it is preferable to avoid carpets in areas of a childcare facility where children are cared for.

Cleaning of communal areas if a person is diagnosed with COVID-19

If a child or adult diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a play area or sleeping area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then these areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined above) as soon as is practicably possible. Pay special attention to frequently touched sites including door handles, backs of chairs, taps of washbasins, toilet handles. Once cleaning and disinfection have been completed and all surfaces are completely dry, the area can be put back into use.

Laundry

- Laundry for example from cots should be washed at the highest temperature that the material can stand.
- Items can be tumble dried and ironed if required using a hot setting/ steam iron.
- Household/rubber gloves can be worn when handling dirty laundry and items should be held away from your clothing. The gloves can be washed prior to removal and dried for reuse. Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water after removing the gloves
- If gloves are not available, hands should be washed thoroughly after handling laundry
- Do not shake dirty laundry to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Set up systems to ensure safe segregation of clean and dirty laundry items and to prevent mix ups. Keep baskets separate.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.
- Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect baskets for laundry according to guidance above for hard surfaces.

Key Good Practice Points for Staff Members

- Do not attend for work if you have symptoms of respiratory virus infection.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, respiratory viruses need access to these body sites in order to cause infection.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Strict attention to personal hygiene is important to reduce the spread of the virus. Grovelands Childcare ensures that a supply of PPE is available and used when required by staff in the service as per our policy. Staff should wear personal protective equipment which must include disposable single-use plastic aprons, and non-powdered, non-permeable gloves when there is a risk of coming into contact with body fluids (such as nappy changing).

An adequate supply of surgical masks is available for anyone that develops symptoms of COVID-19 or if the first response person chooses to use one when caring for a sick child.

While cleaning agents and PPE must be accessible to staff, safe storage of these items must be in place to avoid poisoning or injury to children. Face Shields are available to staff for further protection. These allow the children to observe and see facial expressions along with serving the purpose of protecting the staff

Ventilation

Rooms must be kept well ventilated by keeping windows open where possible at intervals throughout the day or by using effective mechanical ventilation.

Air conditioning is not generally considered as contributing significantly to the spread of COVID-19. Switching off air conditioning is not required to manage the risk of COVID-19.

Toys and play materials/activities

Toys that cannot be cleaned according to the instructions should not be used during this time Individual mouthing toys used for children who are teething must be brought in from home and only used if required. Staff should be vigilant that these items, if used, are not transferred between children and are removed immediately after use. Such items must be sterilised in accordance with manufacturer's guidance. This will also apply to toys located in the room which children mouth. It is important to note manufacturers guidance on sterilising solution may have changed due to COVID-19.

Ensure a sufficient supply of toys and equipment are accessible and clean for each play-pod.

Consideration should be given to how toys are shared. Toys should not be shared between 'play-pods'. Materials not in use should be removed from the room and used in rotation.

Comfort toys from home may be brought into the service but must not be shared with other children. Playdough should be replaced daily, and soft toys should be washed regularly.

Outdoor play and activities

Time spent outdoors should be maximised where possible.

Outings away from the service may be undertaken in accordance with public health guidance Where a service routinely utilises public space, the service can continue to do so following a review of any potential risks.

The use of the outdoor area must be staggered, nevertheless two or more play-pods can play outdoors at the same time provided they adhere to social distancing. Grovelands Childcare will be introducing outdoor separators to ensure play pods adhere to social distancing.

Fixed play equipment in the outdoor area should be cleaned and disinfected after each group uses the area with written record available.

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All staff and children must wash their hands on re-entering the premises after outdoor play. Cleaning of the outdoor play area should be incorporated into the services cleaning schedule.

Food provision

Ancillary/catering staff should not be moving between rooms. Food should be brought to the individual care rooms and served by the staff members allocated to that room.

Staff will portion and serve meals to children.

Meal time poem can still be said without the need to hold hands

If a dining room is available mixing of different groups of children must be avoided. Use of this area should be staggered. The dining area must be cleaned between sittings.

Children's hands should be washed before and after mealtimes

Staff are not permitted under any circumstances to enter the kitchen. Only the manager and Kitchen staff are to enter this area.

Dirty plates and cutlery should be brought to the door of the individual care rooms and returned to the kitchen staff

Sleep/rest

Sleeping cots should be arranged as normal so that there is a physical distance of 50cm between cots.

Sleeping cots should be arranged to so that there is physical distance between groups of cots for children from different pods. If more than 1 play-pod are present in a sleep area/room there should be a distance of 2m between the different play-pods (groups of children).

Cots ideally should not be used by more than one child, and it is preferable that each child requiring a cot would have their own named cot or sleep bed/mat and own named bed linen.

Where this cannot be provided, children can use the same cot at different times subject to strict infection control practices being undertaken between use:

- Cleaning of the cot frame
- Cleaning of the mattress
- Changing of the bed linen
- Labelling of the sleep equipment with the name(s) of the children who use the cot
- Record when the bed linen was changed

Daily cleaning of mattresses and sleep mats must take place with additional cleaning required when visibly soiled.

The provision of individual sheets and bed linen is required, and staff must be vigilant in the safe removal and laundering of soiled linen and the appropriate storage of clean bed linen. All laundry to be washed at the highest temperature that the fabric can tolerate.

Child-sized furniture used in cosy corners must be easy to clean and covered in a wipeable material.

Prevention

There is a number of ways Grovelands Childcare can support staff and parents and put preventions in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

These include:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and of the symptoms of COVID-19 among staff, parents and children
- Induction training for safe in regard to safely returning to work
- Assigned Covid-19 Response Team
- The Completing of regular risk assessments
- Physical Distancing Measures
- Individual Care plans revisited for children or staff who are at higher risk
- Reviewed and updated the Hand Washing Policy and Procedure

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- Reviewed and updated Cough Etiquette
- Reviewed and updated Infection Control Policy
- Limited mixing of groups indoors and outdoors and encourage the use of pods within the centre
- Drop off and collection protocols in place to minimise adult to adult contact
- Heightened Infection Control Measures - Cleaning of Rooms and Equipment
- Hand sanitizers in place and posters for their usage
- Critical Incident Plan for dealing with children or staff who become ill in the centre
- Confidentiality in regard to suspected or confirmed cases
- Managing and Removing of Waste bags
- Cleaning of Communal areas
- Cleaning of Laundry
- Visitors/ Contractors/ Deliveries Protocol
- Revised Mealtime Routine
- Sleep Times
- Drop Off/Collection procedures for under 2years
- Log for contact tracing
- Changes to uniform policy
- Reporting Obligations
- Environment Ventilation
- control measures put in place to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease before the centres reopened

Mental Health and Well-Being

Grovelands Childcare will put in place support for workers who may be suffering from anxiety or stress.

We understand that staff, when they return to work, may have gone through traumatic events such as:

- the serious illness or death of a relative or friend
- be experiencing financial difficulties
- problems with their personal relationships.

We advise staff to follow our Grievance Procedure and report any concerns they may have to their manager or a member of the Senior Management Team.

We also understand that Staff who are returning to the workplace after a period of isolation are likely to have concerns about the risk of infection or changes to their job due to the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Grovelands Childcare will provide workers with information on publicly available sources of support, advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection. Training will be provided to all staff before the centre re-opens and staff will be closely communicated with.

A range of supports and advice is also available from the Health and Safety Authority on work related stress at: [https:// www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Workplace_Stress/](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Workplace_Stress/). The Authority also provides a free online risk assessment tool for addressing work related stress: Work Positive ([www. workpositive.ie](http://www.workpositive.ie)). The Government's "In This Together Campaign" also provides information on minding one's mental health as well as tips on staying active and connected and may be useful for use by employers and workers: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/?referrer=/together>

Mental Health Ireland - Minding our Mental Health during COVID-19

Mental Health Ireland has lots of great resources on its website to help get through this challenging time. It includes great information on supporting ourselves, supporting others, tips and coping strategies and also service and support lines.

1. Mental Health Ireland- Supporting Ourselves
2. In This Together – Campaign launched by the Irish Government with tips on how you can look after your mental wellbeing, stay active and stay connected
3. Healthy Ireland - Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland.
4. Mental Health Ireland - At Mental Health Ireland, our aim is to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all individuals and communities and to support people with lived experience of mental health challenges in their recovery, bringing practical expression to national policy objectives.
5. Samaritans - Round the clock support for people in need; whether your situation is urgent or you just need someone to talk to. You can also contact them if you are worried about a friend and you don't have to be over 18. Calls are confidential and you don't have to give personal details if you don't want to. Call 116 123.
6. Aware- A nationwide organization that provides education, information and support for people dealing with depression or bipolar disorder in Ireland. They provide emotional and practical support through their helpline, which is open Monday to Sunday from 10am to 10pm.
7. Grow is a mental health organization in Ireland. It helps people who have suffered or are suffering from mental health problems.
8. Shine aims to empower people with mental health issues and their families by offering support, information and education.
9. Pieta House is a non-profit organization providing treatment for those experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harm. They also operate the Suicide Bereavement Counselling centre's to provide free counselling, therapy and support to those who have been affected by suicide.

Confidentiality

In the instance where there is a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 staff and parents are to ensure the child/staff members name is not disclosed.

Care must be taken to not release any personal details that would allow these individuals and their dependents to be identified.

Staff members or Parents who through a third party or other means become aware of the identity of a colleague/child infected with COVID-19 are required to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the affected person. Infected individuals as well as their families whose identity has been revealed through rumors and hearsay may suffer from stigmatization, causing them additional unnecessary distress.

Staff and Parents need to understand a child's/fellow staff members medical information is confidential and are required to work diligently to ensure it remains private.



Visitor/Contractor Covid-19 Questionnaire

Name	
Company	
Mobile Number	
Visiting	
Date	

To ensure the Safety & Health of all people interacting with Grovelands Childcare, visitors and contractors must complete this declaration form prior to entering our centres. If you indicate to us you have symptoms of COVID-19 OR you have been abroad in the last 14 days with exception to Northern Ireland you should not be at work. Where this is the case, you are prohibited from entering the centre and advised to seek professional medical help/assistance.

Please circle relevant answers below:

1. Have you visited any of the countries outside Ireland excluding Northern Ireland? Yes / No
2. Are you suffering any flu like symptoms/symptoms of coronavirus covid-19? Yes / No
3. Are you experiencing any difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath? Yes / No
4. Are you experiencing any fever like/Temperature symptoms? Yes / No
5. Did you consult a Doctor or other medical practitioner? Yes / No
6. How are you feeling Healthwise? Well / Unwell
7. Have you been in contact with someone who has visited an affected region in the past 14 days? Yes / No

NOTE: When in the centre, please adhere to our centre processes/procedures regarding infection control, i.e. hand washing/hand sanitising and general coughing/sneezing etiquette?

Signature Visitor: _____

Date: _____

Signed Manager/ Supervisor: _____