

Child Protection & Welfare Policy

Askea Community Childcare Centre is committed to ensuring that all children attending our service are respected, protected and kept safe from harm. Management and staff, volunteers and students in the service recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and will endeavour to safeguard children at all times. All staff employed by Askea Community Childcare Centre are 'Mandated Persons'.

This policy is underpinned by the Childcare Act 1991 [Early Years Services] Regulations 2016, Registration of School Age Services 2018, Our Duty to Care 2002 and Children First National Guidelines for the Protection & Welfare of Children

Principle of Child Protection & Welfare Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff in Askea Community Childcare Centre are 'Mandated Person's' (Children First Act 2015), responsible for ensuring the protection and welfare of children in the centre.

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Mandated persons include professionals working with children in the education, health, justice, youth and childcare sectors.

Mandated persons have two main **legal obligations** under the Children First Act 2015.

These are:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla;
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

Staff have specific responsibilities arising in relation to their position. These roles and responsibilities are:

1. All Staff – The welfare and protection of children is the responsibility of all staff. Staff members must support each other and work in partnership in the best interests of children, as well as ensuring full organisational compliance with the law and policies governing Children First guidance, legislation and safeguarding policies. Members of staff must ensure they:
 - Have read, understood and incorporate into practice:
 - This Policy document,
 - The Askea Community Childcare Centre Child Safeguarding Statement.
 - Are familiar with and consult as necessary:
 - Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)
 - Relevant Tusla reporting guidance.
 - Complete the mandatory Tusla eLearning module 'Always Children First' Child Safeguarding Awareness Training, and attend additional training as appropriate to their role.
2. Management – Roles and responsibilities of management include ensuring their area of responsibility will:
 - Ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities as outlined in this Policy and have signed the signature sheet attached to Askea Community Childcare Policies and Procedure Book and Askea Community Childcare Centre Safeguarding Statement.

- This Policy forms part of the induction process for new staff.
- They provide consultation and assistance to staff who have a child protection concern.
- The Tusla Child Protection Procedure is followed where there is a child protection concern. See 'Child Safeguarding Statement' for Askea Community Childcare Centre.
- There is an appropriate and secure filing system in place to maintain all documentation related to child protection concerns.
- Maintain records of all child protection reports to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána in an appropriate and secure filing system in accordance with Data Protection.
- Maintain appropriate records of all child protection concerns that do not meet the threshold for a report to Tusla and consider any patterns of concerns that may be identified over time.
- Ensure all staff complete the mandatory Tusla eLearning module 'Always Children First' Child Safeguarding Awareness Training, and refresher training as required, as well as any other additional training appropriate to their role. A certificate of completion should be retained on the staff file.
- Confidential information relating to child protection is shared on a **need-to-know** basis.
- Inform the Chairperson of the Committee of Management of any child protection reports submitted to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

Purpose of Child Protection & Welfare Policy

- Comply with "Children First" National Guidelines 2017, for the protection and welfare of children and all regulatory requirements including Garda vetting and referencing.
- A reporting procedure is in place to respond to concerns for children's welfare and safety as per Tusla Reporting of Child Protection Guidelines for Mandated Persons.
- Mandated Persons list is updated when changes occur.
- Confidentiality statement in place and read by all Staff, C.E. workers, Students and Volunteers.
- Code of behaviour for staff, volunteers and students in place.
- Safe recruitment policy in place.
- Procedure for the management/supervision of staff in place.
- Procedure to respond to accidents in place.
- Procedure to respond to complaints in place.
- Staff disciplinary procedure in place.

As part of the child protection policy Askea Community Childcare Centre will:

- Appoint a designated liaison person, a deputy designated liaison person and a designated liaison person in the afore mentioned absence, for dealing with child protection concerns. These staff members will have their names and photographs placed in reception so staff, parents and children are aware of whom to contact if there are any child protection issues or concerns.
- Ensure that staff attend child protection training within the past 3 years such as "Tusla Always Children First", to enable them to recognise the signs of abuse and the correct procedure to report their concerns or to deal with a disclosure made to them.
- Provide Training on the reporting of Child Protection Concerns as per the Tusla Guidelines to all Mandated staff.
- Provide induction training on the centre's Child Protection Policy for staff, students and volunteers.
- Provide supervision and support for staff and volunteers in contact with children.
- Review the child protection policy at least once a year.
- Share information about that policy with parents and families.

Note: any person reporting a suspicion of child abuse in good faith shall have immunity from civil liability under the “Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.”

Definitions and Features of Abuse

There are four different types of abuse:

1. Neglect. Including wilful and circumstantial Neglect.
2. Emotional Abuse.
3. Physical Abuse.
4. Sexual Abuse.

Neglect:

“An omission of care, where a child’s health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties”.

(Children First 2017, p.7)

Features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child’s medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child’s age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

(Children First 2017, p.8)

Emotional:

“Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child’s basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver”.

(Children First 2017, p.8)

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment

- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

(Children First 2017, p.9)

Physical:

“Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents.

(Children First 2017, p.9)

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing, pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

(Children First 2017, p.9)

Sexual:

“Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

(Children First 2017, p.10)

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child’s body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - » Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape

or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]

» Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act

» Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse

- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

(Children First 2017, p.10)

Reasonable Grounds for Concern that a Child is the Victim of Abuse

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

(Children First 2017, p.6)

Guidelines for Responding to a Disclosure by a Child

- Stay calm and listen. Give the child time to say what he/she wants to say
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Don't ask leading questions or make suggestions
- Don't stop the child recalling significant events but don't start to investigate or make the child repeat the story if unnecessary. Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about alleged abuser
- Do not express any opinions about the child or family members
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Explain that you will need to discuss this with someone else
- Ensure that the child understands the procedure that will follow
- Record the disclosure as carefully as possible in the child's own words, as soon as possible after receiving the disclosure
- Inform the DLP. Don't delay or do nothing
- Maintain confidentiality. The information discussed should only be shared at this stage with the DLP and the manager
- Following the disclosure by the child remain supportive to the child and maintain a positive relationship

- Any further disclosures by the child should be treated as a new disclosure and responded to as indicated above

(Children First 2017, p.22)

Helpful things to Say to the Child

- I'm glad you told me
- I'm sorry it happened
- It is not your fault
- You were right to tell, it's ok to tell
- I care and I will try to help but I might have to tell someone else who can help

Responding to and Reporting a Child Protection or Welfare Concern to Tusla

1. Recognising Child Protection & Welfare Concerns

- All Staff, who are Mandated Persons, C.E. workers, Students and Volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and to report child protection and welfare concerns in line with the policy outlined below.
- Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.
- All Staff, C.E. workers, Students and Volunteers should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in Children First, National Guidance, 2017.
- Under the Children First Act 2015 Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold (as defined in section 2 of the Children First Act 2015) to Tusla. Mandated Persons should be familiar with the threshold of harm for each form of abuse as outlined in Children First, National Guidance, 2017.
- All child protection concerns should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person without delay.

2. Reasonable Grounds for Concern

*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 (p.6) states that: Tusla 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'.*

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

All staff and volunteers are expected to bring any child protection concern which meets reasonable grounds for concern to the attention of the DLP and to seek their advice and guidance if unsure.

3. Reporting Procedure - All Staff, C.E. workers, Students and Volunteers (including Mandated Persons):

All Staff, C.E. workers, Students and Volunteers (including Mandated Persons) should follow the procedures in this section when they have a concern that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, harmed or neglected. Mandated Persons should also consult section 4 of this policy.

- When a Staff member, C.E. worker, Student or Volunteer (including a Mandated Person) has a child protection or welfare concern they should speak to the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection (DLP) without delay. This includes concerns which reach the threshold for a mandated report under the *Children First Act 2015*.
- The DLP will report the following child protection and welfare concerns using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (available on www.tusla.ie) to Tusla:
 - Child protection and welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern but do not meet the threshold for mandated reporting.
 - Child protection and welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern and have been passed to them by persons who are not Mandated Persons.
- If the DLP is unsure if a child protection concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern, they should contact Tusla Duty Social Worker for advice and guidance using the informal consultation process.
- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending intervention from Tusla. In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Tusla Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.

Contact Details:	
Tusla Duty Social Work	Carlow /Kilkenny 052/6177302
An Garda Síochána	Athy Road Carlow 059/9136620

- In addition to a report to Tusla, **if there is a criminal or suspected criminal aspect to the child protection concern, An Garda Síochána will be notified by the Mandated Person or DLP as appropriate.**
- The Chairperson of the Committee of Management/owner will be informed when a report is made to Tusla under this policy. In accordance with the Confidentiality Policy identifying information about the child and family is only shared with them on a need to know basis.

4. Reporting Procedures - Mandated Persons Only

- Under the *Children First Act 2015* Mandated Persons are legally required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed to Tusla.
- Mandated Persons should bring any child protection concerns to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) without delay (as in section 3 above).
- If the child protection concern reaches the threshold for harm as defined in the *Children First Act 2015* it is a mandated report. The Mandated Person may seek advice and guidance from the DLP in relation to the child protection concern and the threshold of harm.

- Mandated reports will be made **jointly** by the Mandated Person (who raised the concern) and the DLP, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (available on www.tusla.ie). The form must clearly indicate that the report is a Mandated Report.
- If the child protection concern requires a more urgent intervention to make the child safe, the *Children First Act 2015* allows Mandated Persons to alert Tusla of the concern, by telephone or in person, in advance of submitting a written report. The mandated report must then be submitted to Tusla using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form within 3 days.
- The statutory obligation of Mandated Persons to report under the *Children First Act 2015* **must be discharged by the Mandated Person** and cannot be discharged by the DLP on their behalf. Mandated Persons can however, report jointly with another person.
- Where the Mandated Person or DLP is unsure if the report meets the threshold of harm as outlined in the *Children First Act 2015* advice and guidance should be sought through informal consultation with Tusla Duty Social Work.
- If a child protection concern does not meet the criteria for a mandated report, it may meet 'reasonable grounds for concern' for a report to Tusla and this possibility must be considered. If 'reasonable grounds for concern' exist a report to Tusla will be made by the DLP.
- The Mandated Person may submit the report to Tusla solely, however, the DLP must be informed that the report has been made and be given a copy of the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.
- If a child protection concern has come to the attention of a number of Mandated Persons, the report may be submitted jointly by a number of Mandated Persons.
- Mandated Persons are not required to make a report to Tusla where the sole basis of their knowledge, belief or suspicion of harm is of a result of becoming aware that another Mandated Person has made a report to Tusla.

5. Informing Parents about Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

- **Communication with parents is very important in ensuring best outcomes for children and any concerns about the health and well-being of a child will always be discussed with parents from the outset.**
- Parents will always be informed if a report is to be made to Tusla, by the Designated Liaison Person, unless doing so would further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment or put the reporter at risk of harm. The DLP may seek guidance from Tusla Duty Social Work in relation to this.

6. Responding to a Retrospective Disclosure from an Adult about abuse as a Child

- A retrospective disclosure is a disclosure from an adult about abuse that happened while they were a child. It is imperative that all child protection and welfare concerns are examined and addressed when a retrospective disclosure is made.
- If a Staff member, C.E. worker, Student or Volunteer becomes aware of a retrospective child protection concern they should follow the reporting procedures as outlined above.
- If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the service should report the concern to Tusla without delay using the Retrospective Abuse Report Form (available on www.tusla.ie).

7. Child Protection Concerns that are not Reported to Tusla

If, the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps will be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
- The Staff member, C.E. worker, Student or Volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
- The Staff member, C.E. worker, Student or Volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 will apply to any staff member who wishes to make a report to Tusla.

8. Recording Child Protection Concerns

- Written records will be kept of all child protection concerns (including those not reported to Tusla) and these will be managed by the Designated Liaison Person. Information will include: details of the concern, who raised it, who was contacted, details re informal consultation, any action taken, details re informing parents. See Child Protection Concern Record Template, **Appendix 1**.
- If a child has made a disclosure of abuse, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.
- Records relating to child protection and welfare issues will be kept indefinitely.
- Records will be stored securely in line with the Service Record Policy and the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Note: There is an explicit time frame for making reports or seeking advice. Reports must be made within 24 hours or at the start of the next working day in the case of a weekend or bank holiday.

The Board and Management of Askea Community Childcare Centre recognise that it may be difficult for a staff member, volunteer or student to raise a child protection or welfare concern and the need therefore to support the person who reported the child protection or welfare concern.

If The Designated Liaison Person decides not to pass on a concern raised by a member of staff, volunteer or student, she shall inform them of this in writing indicating the reasons for her decision. The DLP will advise the individual that he/she may proceed and make the report themselves and that the provision of The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 will apply.

Where it has been decided by the Designated Liaison Person that the concerns do not meet reasonable grounds for concern, these will be documented in our incident books and observation logs and kept confidentially and securely for future reference as per the Askea Community Childcare Centre policy on Record Keeping.

The Designated Liaison Person for Askea Community Childcare Centre is **Veronica Doran**

Contact Details: 059 9135206

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is **Edel McGrath**

Contact Details: 059 9135206

In the absence of both of the aforementioned, The Designated Liaison Person is **Noeleen Doyle**

Contact Details: 059 9135206

Askea Community Childcare Centre Safe Management of Activities

In conjunction with the Child Care Act 1991 [Early years Services] Regulations

2016 & Registration of School Age Services 2018

Planning Activities / Knowing the Children

- Registration forms for all children which will include medical details, any special needs, consent for medical attention, permission for photographs, and emergency contact numbers for parents or a person designated with “parental responsibility.”
- Attendance Register.
- Accident Book.
- Authorisation/parental consent forms.
- Adopting Health and Safety Policies.
- Required standards of premises and equipment.
- Heating and ventilation.
- Sanitation facilities.
- Fire Precautions.
- First Aid Facilities.
- Regular maintenance of equipment.
- Adequate provision of insurance cover for children, staff, volunteers

Supervision of Children

Practical Matters, such as:

- Number of participants
- Age and range
- Type of activities
- Environment where the activity is undertaken
- Particular needs of individual participants.
- Organising programmes well in advance.
- Children well supervised.

Knowing staff & volunteers

- Follow a thorough recruitment procedure.
- Keep secure records of details provided at the time of recruitment.
- Have a roster which should be clearly displayed so that everyone is aware who is on the premises.
- Keep a record of complaints/incidents about or involving workers, children/young people or parents.
- Acknowledge stress and assist staff in strategies for coping with it.
- No unrestricted access by parents to children. Parents should be subject to the same recruitment and supervision procedure as staff and volunteers.

Askea Community Childcare Centre Procedure

For dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Employees & Volunteers

The Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children advise that there are two procedures that need to be followed.

1. Reporting procedure in respect of the child.
2. The procedure for dealing with the employee.

In all instances the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration. There shall be no delay in reporting to Tusla or on Garda Siochana.

It is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the Tusla reporting issues and the employment issues.

1. Reporting procedure in respect of the child

- Mandated person should follow the standard procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures of abuse and reporting to Tusla as outlined previously in this policy.
- The Designated Liaison Person should also inform the Chairperson of Committee of Management without delay.

2. The procedure for dealing with the employee

- The manager informs the employee/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation.
- The employee will be given an opportunity to respond. The manager will record the response and pass on the information when making the standard report to Tusla. The employee will be informed of how the information they provide will or may be used.
- Further action will be guided by the employment contract and the rules of natural justice- the first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. Protective measures will be undertaken, proportionate to the level of risk to the child. (Children First 2015, p.111)
- Follow up action on the allegation/concern will be taken in consultation with the investigating agencies; Tusla or/and An Garda Siochanna. After these consultations the employee will be informed of their future position by the Manager and designated member of Committee of Management and an agreed procedure will be followed.
- Askea Childcare will maintain close liaison with Tusla and/or An Garda Siochanna during the course of the investigation.
- Askea Childcare recognise that parents of the child involved will need to be kept up to date with any planned actions or actions taken, taking into consideration the principles of natural justice and confidentiality.

Other Askea Community Childcare Centre Policies relevant to the Child Protection Policy

Confidentiality Statement

It is the policy of Askea Community Childcare to keep confidential all personal information about families, children and staff in this service.

However, an exception to this is when child protection concerns arise, in which case the organisation cannot keep such information secret. In this situation information will be shared on a need to know basis in the best interest of the protection and welfare of the child.

The Committee and Management of Askea Community Childcare recognise that parents and children have a right to know if personal information about them is being shared with outside agencies, unless doing so could put the child at further risk or harm.

Management, staff, volunteers/students in this service will be advised of our confidentiality policy and will be required to read, understand, agree and sign it.

Records

Keeping accurate and up to date records in relation to children, staff and service provision is essential in order to comply with the Childcare (Preschool Services) Reg. 2006/2016. The Preschool inspector will have access to files for inspection purposes.

Only staff involved with a particular child should have access to confidential files.

Where there is a welfare or child protection concern, observations and records are kept on an ongoing basis and information shared with Tusla social work services as appropriate.

Note: Confidential files are kept in a locked filing cabinet/drawer.

Induction Training and Supervision

- All management, staff volunteers and students are briefed on the Askea Child Protection Policy as part of their induction training.
- All management, staff, volunteers and students are required to sign up to the Askea Child Protection & Welfare Policy.
- All management, staff and volunteers are encouraged to attend Child Protection training and any other relevant training as identified.
- Staff will be provided with information in relation to particular skills training to encourage professional development and best practice.
- Regular supervision and support will be available to new and existing staff through one to one meetings and staff meetings.

Code of Behaviour

Askea Community Childcare is of the belief that staff and volunteers should have a child centred holistic approach to working with children. All staff, volunteers should have a clear understanding of what is acceptable with respect to their behaviour with children. This is very important to protect children from harm and staff, children and parents from misinterpretation of their actions.

We aim to do this by:

- Valuing and respecting all children as individuals.
- Listening to children.
- Involving children in decision making, where appropriate.
- Encouraging children.
- Having an anti-bullying policy.
- Promoting positive behaviour.
- Having an accident/incident policy.

We do not:

- Engage in, or allow inappropriate touching in any form.
- Verbally abuse or physically punish any child.
- Condone bullying or abusive behaviour by staff, volunteers or other children.
- Undertake intimate care needs without consulting and agreeing arrangements with the child and their parents.
- Engage in practices that demean or humiliate children.

We are aware:

- Of developing favouritism or becoming overly involved with any one child.
- That while physical contact is a valid way of comforting or reassuring a child, it should take place in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult in an open environment.
- Of the need to be sensitive to the diverse cultures in Askea Childcare.
- That children should be supported and encouraged to let staff know if they have any complaints, concerns or difficulties.

Recruitment Procedure

Askea Community Childcare will ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected by undertaking the following:

- Devising a clear job description which outlines the qualifications, skills and experience needed.
- Advertising widely using the agreed job description.
- Requesting candidates to supply information on, personal details, past and current work, volunteering experience, qualifications or skills relevant to the post.
- Interviews are conducted by a panel and are consistent and transparent.
- Two written references are supplied and are followed up with a phone call to verify that they are bona fide. This is also an opportunity to ascertain there if there has been any concerns that have not been outlined in the written reference.
- Garda Vetting is obligatory in relation to all staff, volunteers, students, committee members and contract workers entering the service.
- Two forms of identification including photo id, address and signature such as Passport/Drivers Licence will be supplied.
- All staff will have a signed Employment Contract.
- All staff will read and sign the Employees Handbook.
- A probationary period is written into the contract.
- Volunteers and students will not be left unsupervised at any time.

Complaints Procedure

- All complaints are taken seriously and dealt with in a fair and confidential manner.
- There is a complaints policy in place.
- Askea Community Childcare Centre aim to work in partnership with parents by seeking parent's views and encouraging parents to participate in any decision-making in relation to the service.
- Children will be made aware of the complaint's procedure in an age appropriate way.

Code of Behaviour for Staff

If there is a breach of the Code of Behaviour by staff the disciplinary procedure may be invoked by the Askea Committee of Management.

Child Care Act 1991 [Early Years Services] Regulations 2016

The Tusla Preschool Inspector will be involved in preparing a report in relation to any breach of Early Years Services Regulations.

Communication Plan For staff & families

All parents/guardians are informed of the Child Protection & Welfare Policy on enrolment. Staff members check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy is included in the Parents'/Guardians Information Pack. This policy will also be reviewed with the staff team at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to all staff team members, parents and school-aged children in the Policy Folder located in Reception.

Parents and school -aged children may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents and all staff members will receive notification of any updates.

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Safe Guarding Statement
- Admissions Policy
- Drop Off & Collection Policy
- Partnership with Parents Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Record Keeping Policy
- Key Worker Policy
- Interactions Policy
- Communication Policy
- Enrolment Forms
- Accident Management Policy
- Incident Recording Forms
- Child Protection Concerns Record

References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation

- Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
- School Age Regulations 2018
- Guardianship of Infants Act 1964
- Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Who Must Observe This Policy

- Management and Staff
- Parents/Guardians
- Authorized persons nominated by parents/guardians on enrolment forms

Contact Information

If you need more information about this policy, contact:

Name	Veronica Doran, Childcare Manager
Phone number or email	0599135206 askeacm@gmail.com

Date this policy was created	September 2016
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Date this policy was reviewed	March 2020
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Date this policy will be reviewed	March 2022
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Appendix 1

Child Protection Concern Record

Date	Child's Name	Summary of Concern - Note where full details are stored	Person who Raised the Concern	Action Taken and by Whom Informal Consultation with Tusla?	If a Referral was made to Tusla - date and by whom.