

# Managing Behaviour & Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

At Askea Community Childcare Centre we seek to ensure that the emotional, social and general well-being of the children who attend our Service is positively supported in a happy, safe, well-planned and controlled environment. We are committed to giving each child the support, guidance and understanding necessary to assist them in learning how to manage and regulate their own behaviour in ways that are appropriate for their age and level of understanding.

## Principle for Behaviour Management

This policy is underpinned by the Childcare Act 1991 [Early Years Services] Regulations 2016, School Age Regulations 2018, The European Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism 1996, Education Act 1998, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (ESPEN) Act 2004, The Disability Act 2005, The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – Adopted in 2006, The Equal Status Act 2000-2015, Our Duty to Care 2002 and Children First National Guidelines for the Protection & Welfare of Children

### RATIONAL

This Managing Behaviour and Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy outlines the service's commitment to supporting positive behaviour, safeguarding children, and to provide a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where each child and/or young person can play, learn, relax, and develop. The policy outlines the service's commitment to implementing safe, respectful, developmentally appropriate and child-centred strategies to manage and promote positive behaviour.

The service works with parents/guardians to support preschool children/school-age children in adopting lifelong positive attitudes and behaviours.

This Policy is to ensure that the following needs are met:

### Children's Needs:

- To be allowed the freedom and scope to learn through hands-on exploration and experimentation in a well-planned, well-resourced and well-ordered environment and to test the limits of their bodies to learn what they are capable of
- To be able to do this within reasonable and appropriate limits for their own and other's safety and well being
- To receive the support, guidance and understanding that will help them to learn how to manage and regulate their own behaviour in ways that are appropriate for their age and level of understanding
- To be supported to learn how to understand their feelings and learn how to express them in appropriate, acceptable and safe ways
- To be supported as they learn how to manage conflict positively
- To be provided with a secure, responsive and safe environment.

### Parents'/Families' Needs:

- To know that their child's needs will be appropriately met and their child's development will be supported in positive, and constructive ways

- To know that their child will be safe and happy
- To know that they will be involved in decision-making about how their child's social, emotional and behaviour skills are being supported and developed and that the service will contact them, and work in partnership with them, in the event of any challenging or concerning behaviours.

**Staff Needs:**

- To have clear policy and procedural guidance on what the service's approach is to supporting children in their social, emotional and behavioural development
- To consistently follow through with behaviour guidance strategies
- To be clear on what are, and are not, acceptable ways of responding to behaviours which they may find challenging
- To know what is expected of them in relation to working in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure that children receive a consistent and shared approach to supporting them with their behaviour skills
- To be safe in their working environments when supporting children with positive behaviour.

## Policy Statement

Our approach to supporting children with their social, emotional and behaviour skills is to ensure, as far as possible, that children are kept comfortable, relaxed, happy and engaged in play and other activities while the adults model positive ways of relating to them and each other. We recognise the need to understand children's behaviour as a form of communication and to consider what might be triggering the behaviour and what the child is communicating. Children will be supported to learn how to express their feelings in appropriate ways and helped to learn how to deal positively with conflict.

Askea Community Childcare Centre recognises that every child will have their own individual needs and abilities and we will work in partnership with parents/guardians, and other professionals involved in a child's life, to promote positive behaviours in a caring, supportive environment.

The methods of dealing with challenging, unsafe or disruptive behaviour in this service will only be those that help children to develop self-regulation and are developmentally appropriate. Only positive approaches to guidance are used, including logical or natural consequences applied in problem situations, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems and encouragement of appropriate behaviour.

Staff interactions with children are aimed at promoting their well-being and development. This includes their social and emotional development. Adequate and appropriate stimulation is provided for each child and any inappropriate or challenging behaviour is dealt with sensitively and appropriately.

We inform parents/guardians about this policy on enrolment and seek information from families about the behaviour guidance strategies they use at home.

We recognise that it is important to understand the expectations of parents/guardians regarding our approach to behaviour guidance in the service before children first come to our service. We do our utmost to keep open lines of communication with families on an ongoing basis (See Key Educator Policy).

While staff are aware of and respect individual children's and families' backgrounds and beliefs, it may sometimes be necessary to balance these with our knowledge of developmentally appropriate

practices and current best practice recommendations from recognised appropriate authorities in the best interests of the child.

Children are supported to engage in regulating their behaviour and resolving conflicts. Strategies are in place to ensure there is positive support for, and cooperation between preschool children/school-age children.

At Askea Community Childcare Centre our approach to supporting and promoting children's positive social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing is reflective of up-to-date professional practice. Our procedures for managing behaviour are included in staff induction and annual staff training and every effort is made to avail of relevant training offered by the County Childcare Committee and other training agencies.

## Procedures and Practices for Behaviour Management

Behaviour management is promoted by using a range of **positive and supportive procedures** which will result in developing acceptable behaviour:

- Children will be given positive choices/options.
- Children will have an input to the curriculum.
- Staff will offer praise and encouragement to all children to enable them to feel valued, empowered included and confident in the environment.
- Staff will implement fair and consistent expectations regarding behaviour
- A positive and calm approach will be taken by staff to all situations, always being conscious of the effect of the adult reaction to the behaviour of the child
- Children will be given short, simple and clear age appropriate positive instructions to help them change any unacceptable behaviour
- The use of "when and then" option will help children to learn how to change their actions and help develop independence skills e.g. if toys are to be tidied up staff will say: 'when' the toys are tidied up 'then' we will go outside to play
- Children will be encouraged to develop skills to deal with issues such as turn taking and sharing.

Exhibitions of challenging behaviour are natural at certain ages and stages of development and children need to be supported through this behaviour. Some of the reasons that children behave in a challenging manner could be as a result of a learned behaviour, boredom, attention seeking, sickness or frustration.

Staff understand that there are many influences on a child's behaviour – these include:

- Age and development
- General health and well-being
- Relationships with and within their family
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day
- Early years staff practice and interactions
- Relationships with other children and others
- Factors, such as family, home life or peer group experiences.

The role that families play, especially parents/guardians, is crucial to the success of the behaviour guidance approach here at Askea Community Childcare Centre. Parents/guardians will be provided with regular opportunities to contribute to the service's general approaches to promoting positive

outcomes for children as well as the development and review of their own child's individual care and education plan.

## **CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES CHILDREN'S SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL WELLBEING**

### **The role of the adult**

Adults who are loving, patient, and firm help children to learn that it makes sense to act in certain ways. Behaviour guidance based on trust, respect, love and consistency helps children to build self-esteem and self-discipline.

Adults can help children to avoid inappropriate behaviour by helping them to understand rules and guidelines. Children become aware of the Service's routines and procedures and therefore understand what is expected of them.

When a child does something inappropriate, adults can help them look at the consequences of their actions and think about what they can do to make things better.

Adults always need to consider whether a child may have some unmet need that is leading to the inappropriate behaviour, or is experiencing some distress, and look at ways to address this in addition to helping the child with managing their behaviour.

### **In daily interaction:**

- Staff interact frequently with the children in a calm, friendly, positive, respectful manner.
- Staff are available and responsive to the children.
- All children regardless of race, religion, family background, culture, gender or ability are treated with respect and consideration.
- Independence in children is encouraged and scaffolded, as they are ready.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings are acknowledged and given sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-regulation.
- Children are generally kept comfortable, relaxed, happy and involved in play and other activities.
- Pro-social behaviours among children are recognised and encouraged.
- Staff expectations for children's social behaviour are developmentally appropriate – children's level of understanding and maturity are taken into account.
- Children are encouraged to verbalise feelings, ideas and interests.
- Staff plan activities and tell stories that help children learn about right and wrong.
- Children are distracted from unwanted behaviour.
- When behaviour is unacceptable, staff explain to the child/children why it is unacceptable in a way they can understand.
- Children need movement for their learning and development and are allowed to move freely for a significant part of the day.
- Soft, quiet spaces are provided for children to withdraw comfortably when they are feeling tired or overwhelmed or just want to be alone.

### **Strategies recommended in Aistear that we use include:**

- Anticipating conflict and supporting children in resolving it, coming to the assistance of frustrated children and helping them find solutions.
- Modelling social behaviour when interacting with adults and children, thus helping children to learn from others' social skills such as taking turns, listening, sharing, asking for something, and saying excuse me, sorry, please, and thank you.

- Encouraging children to help each other during their activities, play and routines.
- Helping children share skills and knowledge with each other.
- Encouraging and acknowledging spontaneous co-operative efforts made by the children.
- Talking to children about the time they spend together.
- Encouraging children to play co-operative games.
- Interacting with (play and converse with) children rather than managing (giving instructions and warnings).

**Boundary/limit setting and rules**

- Any limits are clearly related to the safety, welfare and protection of the child themselves and others around them.
- Limits are communicated in a way that is respectful of all.
- Rules are as few as possible, consistently upheld and within the children's understanding.
- Staff consult with the children, in an age appropriate way, regarding the codes of behaviour and rules.
- Clear, reasonable boundaries on behaviour are provided and explained.
- Rules are written positively, e.g. 'we walk inside' rather than 'no running'.
- Children are allowed enough time to respond to requests for them to behave within the rules or codes of behaviour, according to their needs and understanding – young children may take more time than adults to think through what is being asked of them.

**Provide choice**

- Negotiating choices between the adult and child can help children take appropriate responsibility and prepares them with positive life skills such as listening and reasoning.
- Whenever there is an opportunity for a real choice to be made, children are given the chance to exercise choice and then follow through on it.
- Younger children are given choices within limits, as appropriate to their level of development, e.g. 'would you like me to put your coat on or will you do it yourself?'

**Positive reinforcement and encouragement**

- Positive behaviour, however small, is encouraged and affirmed with both words and body language (e.g. nods, smiles).
- When a child is behaving well and when they are trying to stop themselves engaging in negative activities, this is noticed and acknowledged. This builds self-confidence and encourages children to repeat positive behaviour.
- Negative behaviour is ignored when it is judged safe and appropriate to do so.
- Children are encouraged in their activities.
- Encouragement is demonstrated by adults participating with children in their activities, at the children's invitation, taking care not to 'take over'.

**Schedules, routines and transitions**

- Schedules, routines and transitions serve as a framework from which children gain trust, security and order. These are always flexible, with as few transitions as possible, but they provide clear guidelines about what is expected.
- Any changes to the scheduling within the timetable will be clearly communicated to the children (and their families where necessary), along with clear reasons for the change (see Transitions Policy).

### The physical environment

- The way in which physical space is arranged and used can either encourage or discourage desired behaviour. Space is aesthetically pleasing, planned and well organised to diminish the potential for problems.
- Space is sufficient so children can play and work creatively in a relaxed setting. Providing, or allowing for, insufficient space for an activity will limit and is likely to influence children's behaviour negatively.
- The outdoor space provides opportunities for children to move more freely, be louder without restrictions and become calmer.
- Active, loud and energetic play spaces are balanced with soft, passive, quiet and peaceful areas both indoors and outdoors.

### Toys, materials and resources

- Resources for working with children are developmentally appropriate and in good condition.
- Open-ended materials are provided to allow children to use them in whatever way they choose and support engagement in play.
- There are enough easily accessible materials and equipment with enough complexity to keep children engaged for long enough without having to share too much or wait too long.

### Responding to challenging behaviour

We recognise that some of the ways children tell us they are stressed and overwhelmed are when they show the following behaviours on a regular basis.

For example, they:

- are overactive
- have difficulty focusing on or completing a task
- become easily frustrated
- have difficulty making decisions
- have difficulty following directions
- solve problems by hitting, biting, grabbing or pushing
- have tantrums
- cling to adults
- avoid new tasks
- do not play with other children
- cry frequently and cannot be soothed easily
- do not eat

Staff will always respond supportively to children's distress.

### 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 settles 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 defused, 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.
- Contact parent/guardian to collect their child when behaviour cannot be managed.

### **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 will only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time. The purpose of this intervention will 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 will 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.

**Staff behavior:**

- It is important to promote only limits that guide children's safety and security rather than any that might curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity.
- Staff are aware of and understand that their own dispositions, values, attitudes, temperaments, expertise, reactions and responses to children impact on the behaviours that the children learn.
- Staff acknowledge that the emotions experienced by children are significant, e.g. an adult who is not scared of thunder will support a child not to overreact but will not trivialise the fear or anxiety the child expresses.
- Staff respond to and acknowledge children's feelings and emotions such as happiness, anger, pleasure, fear, anxiety, frustration, sadness, and pride and help children to learn to name their feelings and emotions.
- Staff understand that children may not yet have developed the appropriate ways to express emotions due to their age and/or stage of development.
- Staff attitudes and practice demonstrate an understanding and empathy towards children who display behaviours that are not always consistent with their level of development and/or general disposition.
- It will always be made clear to the child in question that it is the behaviour and not the child that is unacceptable.
- Staff are committed to nurturing and supporting children by suggesting alternative ways of responding and where possible giving children choice, rather than telling them how to behave.
- An atmosphere which fosters trust, security and comfort is created by giving children time and attention to enable them to talk and express their feelings.
- Children are in an environment that encourages caring and co-operative relationships, which supports them to relate with each other in more positive ways by learning through example from the adults and positive behaviour from their peers.
- Staff model appropriate behaviour, so that children can see what to do and learn from positive examples, rather than simply instructing them to do things. An example of this is joining in and encouraging children to clear up toys or paints after a session and making this fun, ending the session in a positive way.
- Any limitations to a child's behaviour are phrased in a positive way, focusing on 'what to do' rather than 'what not to do'. By using these positive statements, staff reinforce for children appropriate and desirable ways of communication. It also decreases the likelihood of children responding with resistance or defensiveness.

- Explaining to children the 'why' of behaviour guidance and the limits will help them to internalize and learn the rules of positive social interaction.
- Minor incidents are best ignored. As long as their behaviour is not impacting negatively on others, adults sometimes need to step back, take a breath and decide not to speak or intervene.
- Staff will listen to children and respond in a fair and supportive way, giving them a greater sense of comfort and trust and encouraging them to use the adult as a reliable source of advice by demonstrating that what they say is valued.

### Prohibited practices

It is important to note the following:

- Children are never ignored, spoken to sarcastically, humiliated, segregated, or have food withheld.
- Corporal punishment i.e. any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.
- Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, isolating, emotionally and/or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending this service.
- Bullying of any form is prohibited
- Restraint of children by unapproved methods is prohibited.

### SERIOUS BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

Serious behaviours of concern may include:

- A repeated pattern of behaviour that interferes with the child's learning or engagement in social interactions with peers and adults, as it necessitates withdrawal from the whole group setting.
- Behaviours that are not responsive to the consistent implementation of the guidance procedures /approaches described previously.
- Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour (e.g. screaming, property destruction, self-injury, persistent non-compliance).

When a child engages in serious behaviours of concern that cause disruption and interrupt the engagement **and safety** of other children in the group in any preschool/afterschool/childcare activities, the following approaches will be implemented:

- Review the programme to ensure that it is meeting the child's care, learning and development needs.
- Review the service's approaches to support the child to maintain a regulated state.
- Document all incidents of challenging behaviour and record subsequent responses.
- Develop an individual plan to support this child to maintain a regulated state, in consultation with their parents/guardians. The purpose of this plan will be to identify the factors leading to the child's dysregulation, as well as identifying targeted supports that can be implemented within the setting. These supports and approaches will focus on helping the child to relate well **to** others and make friends in line with their preferences for social interaction, 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:**

- Data generated from observing and recording the identified behaviour of concern.
- The factors which have been identified as underpinning this de-regulation.
- Proposed strategies, supports and approaches that will help a child to manage the demands of the setting (tasks, engagement with others and sensory aspects). This focus on skill development will be in line with a child's age and development stage and aims to prevent both the intensity and frequency of the identified behaviour of concern.
- The proposed response that will be used consistently by all staff working with the child; this will focus on responding when the behaviour of concern occurs.
- This plan will be shared with parents/guardians to ensure that a consistent approach can be undertaken by both home and the childcare setting. Parents/guardians are encouraged to maintain on-going communication with staff on the approaches being implemented.
- An implementation date, review date and review procedure (who will be involved, how this will be monitored etc).

When the steps listed above do not yield changes in the behaviour of concern, either by the established date of review, or earlier in the event of a serious behaviour of concern which impacts the health and safety of both the child and/or others, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice, such as a Psychologist, or Occupational Therapist. The parents/guardians 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, in conjunction with the individual plan that has been outlined above, as far as the resources of the service allow.

## **EXPULSION**

In exceptional circumstances where a child's behaviour constitutes a significant **threat** to self, others, and/or property, it may be considered necessary for the Board of Management of Askea Community Childcare Centre to request that the child leaves the service.

The decision to expel a child will be made in the event of serious behaviours of concern:

- the child's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the education and care process
- the child's continued presence in the service constitutes a real and significant threat to safety of self and/or others
- the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

Having exhausted all opportunities for supporting the child's regulation to reduce the frequency and intensity of the identified behaviours of concern, parents will be informed in writing that the possibility of expulsion will now have to be considered. This serves the important function of underlining to the parents the seriousness with which the service views the alleged behaviour.

Parents will have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about how to proceed.

Children attending the afterschool service may be included in these discussions when appropriate.

**Procedure:**

Where a preliminary assessment of facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant **expulsion**, the procedural steps will include:

- 1) A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Director of Services.
- 2) A confidential recommendation **made** to the Board of Management by the Director of Services.
- 3) Consideration by the Board of Management **of** both the information contained within the Director of Service's recommendation as well as any information provided by the parents/guardians, which will be facilitated in a meeting with them
- 4) A decision is reached on the expulsion. The **Board of Management** is the decision-making body in this instance.
- 5) Parents will be informed in writing of the decision.
- 6) Where a decision is made to expel a child Tusla will be informed.

**It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires a separate meeting, and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of the meetings and reasonable time to prepare for such meetings.**

All staff team members will be provided with support to deal with stressful situations arising from dealing with challenging behaviour. (See Staff Supervision Policy).

**ANTI BULLYING**

Bulling is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) which is repeated over time. The following are some of the types of bulling behaviour which can occur:

- *Physical aggression* - this includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping.
- *Intimidation* – this may be based on the use of very aggressive body language or a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- *Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying* - this occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire group. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.
- *Name calling* - persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- *Damage to property* - items of personal property being defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- *Cyber-bullying* - involves unwanted messages, images, audio or video sent by electronic means to threaten, abuse or harm someone.

At our Service we recognise that a cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is the creation of a positive and supportive environment which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

**Bullying is not tolerated within the Service whether inflicted on adults or children.**

We follow these guidelines:

- Staff ensure that all children feel safe, happy and secure within the setting and will promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and self-discipline.
- Staff develop positive relationships with all children and encourage them to speak about and identify their feelings i.e. happy, sad, angry.
- Staff are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is a part of children's development and that positive opportunities should be in place to channel this effectively. They will not, however, ignore aggressive behaviour but will initiate an appropriate activity with the children. See Appendix 1
- Staff will encourage children, at an age and stage appropriate level, to resolve their problems and take responsibility for their actions.
- Staff will adopt a policy of intervention when they feel a child is not being treated in a fair or appropriate manner.
- Staff will be available to discuss any parent/guardian's concern/s to ensure that their child can feel confident and secure in the Service.
- Any instance of bullying will be recorded and investigated, and staff will work in partnership with parents /guardians to seek a consistent resolution of the problem.

#### ***Cyber Bullying***

After-school children are required to leave their phones in their school bags while in the Service.

Barnardo's **STAR** poster regarding cyber bullying is displayed in the After-school room.

#### **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A CHILD LEAVING THE SERVICE UNACCOMPANIED WITHOUT AUTHORISATION:**

*Children are not permitted* to leave the Service unless collected by a parent/guardian or other nominated person and adequate supervision is provided to ensure that no one can remove a child from the service without at least one staff member's knowledge and a record being kept (See Drop-off and Collection Policy).

**In the event, however, of it being discovered that a child may have left the building unaccompanied the following procedures will be followed:**

- Staff will inform the Director of Services immediately.
- It will be established who last saw the child, when and doing what.
- Without alarming them children in the group will be asked whether they have seen the child – they can sometimes be a source of useful information
- Staff will thoroughly search each room in the building and also any accessible outside area.
- All members of staff (including those who may have finished work) will be asked for any information they may have on the movements of the child within the Centre
- The child's parents /guardians will be contacted to determine whether they (or a nominated person) may have collected the child without a member of staff being informed. If this is not the case they will be warned that the child may be attempting to get home.
- If the child lives within walking distance of the Service, one Staff member will make the journey on foot in order to catch up with, or intercept, the child if possible.
- If the above steps do not locate the child An Garda Siochana will be informed and asked to conduct a search.

- The Tusla Duty Officer will be notified.
- A record of the event will be built up as soon as an adult has time to do so. This is important, even if the child is found safe within a few minutes.
- The Insurance Company will be notified.

## RECORDING INCIDENTS

Records of significant incidents are kept and should include:

- a) The child's name
- b) Time and location of the incident
- c) Events leading up to the incident
- d) The nature of the incident
- e) Others involved
- f) Witnesses
- g) How the situation was handled
- h) Whether restraint was used, what form of restraint and the reason for it
- i) Consequences
- j) Parents/guardians signature/s

(See Accidents and Incidents Policy).

## COMMUNICATION PLAN *[For staff & families]*

Expectations and agreed codes of behaviour are accessible and communicated to all, using a variety of media, e.g. handbooks, posters and pictures. They are communicated in a way that ensures that they are understood according to the levels of literacy and understanding of every child.

All parents/guardians are informed of the Policy on Managing Behaviour 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' Handbook. This policy will also be included in staff induction and annual staff training.

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

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the full policy at any time upon request. Parents/guardians and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

If any staff member or parent/guardian consider that this policy is not being implemented they are invited to follow the Complaints Procedure to make a complaint.

## Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Settling-In Policy
- Policy on Accidents and Incidents
- Complaints Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Parent/Carer Involvement Policy
- Communications Policy
- Key Educator Policy
- Transitions Policy
- Records and Record Keeping Policy

- Drop-off and Collection Policy
- Incident Report Form

**References**

- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
- Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education
- Síolta Research Digests: Standard 5 Interactions and Standard 9 Health and Welfare
- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
- Aistear Síolta Practice Guide
- Supporting Young Children's Behaviour Skills, Barnardos, 2016
- Your Young Child's Behaviour: how you can help, Barnardos, 2014
- Supporting Quality: guidelines for professional practice in early childhood services (3rd edition) by Geraldine French, Barnardos, 2008
- Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) Framework (Department of Education and Skills)

**Who Must Observe This Policy**

Parents, staff, volunteers and students.