Cappoquin Childcare Facility Mill Street, Cappoquin, Co Waterford. Telephone 058 52746



Parents Handbook

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**1.0 Commencement and Admissions Policies.**

**(1.1) ADMISSIONS**

In order to reserve a place for a child, parents should contact the Manager to ensure that a place is available. If not, the child will be put on a waiting list until one becomes available. An application form, which can be obtained from the manager, must be completed and submitted to reserve a place.

Places are allocated with preference given to those parents requiring the most number of days. For example, a child requiring 5 days will get preference over a child requiring 2 days, and a child requiring full days will get preference over a child requiring part-time. Parents who already have children attending will also be given preference. After that we operate on a first come first served basis.

N.B. A registration form and Direct Debit Mandate must be filled in and returned to Cappoquin Community Childcare at least one month in advance of the child wishing to commence in the facility.

Before starting in Cappoquin Community Childcare, parents will be given a copy of the Parent Handbook which includes a Memorandum of Understanding.

This must be completed and signed, and returned to the office. Other documentation must also be signed e.g. Bottle and Pacifier policy. These can be handed to the room leader.

**(1.2) SETTLING IN POLICY**

The settling in time is very important to the child. Starting a new adventure can be frightening. All children will be gradually introduced into the crèche. At first the child will only stay for one or two hours. This usually lasts for several days or maybe even weeks, depending on each individual child. This process is to benefit your child’s smooth transition into the crèche, giving them time to adjust into our daily routine.

Parents are asked to work together with childcare staff and are encouraged to stay in the centre with their child at first and to leave when staff feel the time is appropriate

**(1.3) RECORD KEEPING**

Cappoquin Community Childcare will maintain relevant data which is required by law for the efficient running of its stated operation in compliance with relevant data requirements.

* The Childcare manager is responsible for ensuring that all information relating to a child's place is kept up to date by doing 3-6 monthly reviews.
* All records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet to which only Childcare manager and relevant staff will have access.
* Depending on information required, records and data will only be shared with staff on a need to know basis.
* In relation to other agencies both statutory and non - e.g. HSE, GP - information will be shared on a case by case basis and where possible, in discussion with parents.
* All data will be retained and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2003.with all relevant legislation.

**(1.4) TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT POLICY**

* It should be noted that if a child is attending the crèche, they are contracted for 50 weeks.
* ECCE only and school age sessions are for 38 weeks.
* Parents will be billed for their contracted hours even in the case of non-attendance.
* ECCE children who attend for more hours than the FREE session will be contracted and billed for those hours for non ECCE weeks between September and June.
* There is no provision for taking holidays.
* Parents must give one month’s notice in writing when they are seeking a reduction in hours by completing Form D available in the office.
* All Bank Holidays must be paid for.
* A retainer fee will be charged for children who do not attend and/or reduce their contracted hours during July and August but still want to retain their place for September. Form E must be completed.
* All fees are payable by Direct Debit

**(1.5) EARLY ARRIVALS AND LATE COLLECTIONS**

A charge of €10 will be incurred and a further €5 for every ten minutes thereafter for early arrivals and late collections. This is necessary to cover additional staffing costs that the crèche incurs as a result. Contracted hours need to be adhered to.

**(1.6) FEES POLICY**

* Fee lists for government schemes are subject to change based on rules of programme.
* Cappoquin Community Childcare will adhere to these rules whilst in contract for those programmes.
* Fees lists are subject to approval by Waterford County Childcare Committee.
* Fees will be charged weekly in advance in agreement between the parents/Guardians and the Creche. Payments which are made weekly will be collected by Direct Debit on a Friday.

**(1.7) ARREARS POLICY**

Any parents who are in arrears should make contact with the Office immediately to discuss putting a Payment Plan in place to restore the account to a nil balance. Failure to do this will run the risk of their Childcare place being suspended until such arrears have been paid.

**2.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**(2.1) CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Cappoquin Community Childcare** will ensure a safe and secure environment is provided for all children in our care. The service recognises the parents as being the primary carers of their children. It aims to help primary carers under stress to cope with their child’s behaviour and to support them and give respite and thus prevent abuse. Staff members are trained at induction stage and afterwards on an on-going basis on current child protection procedures. *Children First*, the Department of Health and Children’s Guidelines on protecting children from abuse, clearly places a duty upon the service providers to protect their children. It is the responsibility of this service to report any suspicions of neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse to the Tusla. All staff members have a duty of care with regard to all children and may report to the designated person in the service, who is known to them. Parents/Guardians are informed if a report has been made, *unless if to do so would place a child in greater danger*.

**Steps to be taken by the Child Protection Officer on receiving a report of abuse**

* Receive a written report of actual or suspected harm.
* Discuss with internal childcare committee.
* Consider if there are reasonable grounds for reporting to the Statutory Bodies (i.e. Tusla and/or Gardai)
* If considered necessary, discuss the matter with, and seek advice from a Child Protection Professional (Social Welfare Officer)
* Make report to Tusla (or Gardai if out of hours) by phone and standard reporting form
* The Tusla phone number is 053 9185680
* The local Gardai phone number is 058-54244

Note: The designated person in our service is Maria Uniacke

Deputy: Kerry McLaughlin

Further information is available in the Childcares' Child Protection Policy Document.

**(2.2) CHILD COLLECTION POLICY**

A child must be collected from the centre at the pre-arranged time. Being collected late will distress a child. Time should be allowed to talk to staff about a child’s day before leaving the centre. Adults collecting a child must be over the age of 18 years of age and named on the child's enrolment form. A child will not be allowed to leave the centre with an unauthorised adult. To get an adult authorised to collect a child, parents are asked to bring that person to the centre to meet the staff beforehand, or if this is not possible to furnish a photograph.

When a child is collected, they must be signed out and staff members should be notified of their departure.

**(2.3) PARENTS WHO ARRIVE TO COLLECT CHILDREN IN AN "UNFIT STATE"**

Staff members have no legal rights to withhold a child from a parent/guardian in these circumstances. However, the following measures may be adopted where appropriate.

* Attempt to calm/parent/guardian before they leave with the child, e.g invite them to sit down for a cup of tea and talk with a staff member.
* Offer to contact a family member or friend, or the persons listed as the child's emergency contact on their enrolment form.
* Offer to call a taxi.

If the parent/guardian rejects the above suggestions and insists on taking the child, there is no legal recourse open to staff. The Garda may be contacted after the parent/guardian leaves where there is risk to the child through negligent driving. The incident will be recorded by the member of staff involved.

**(2.4) ILLNESS**

The crèche is intended for healthy children. It is important that a sick child is kept at home to prevent the spread of infection. This is in the best interest of all children. Children with contagious conditions may not return to Cappoquin Childcare until the relevant number of days for exclusion have elapsed.

Infectious diseases

* Chickenpox ( Until all blisters have scabbed over)
* Croup ( After the cough has subsided)
* Ear Infection ( After 3 doses of medication or after 48 hours)
* Fever ( Over 37.7)
* Impetigo ( After 48 hours of medication)
* Conjunctivitis ( After 48 hours on medication and no matter in eyes)
* Diarrhoea ( After the child has one formed stool)
* Vomiting ( After 24 hours clear of vomiting)
* Head Lice ( After one complete treatment and removal of all nits)
* Strep Throat ( After the child has been on medication for 48 hours)
* Thrush ( After 48 hours on medication)

**(2.5) IF A CHILD BECOMES ILL WHILE ATTENDING THE CRÈCHE**

In this event, staff are required to contact Parents or “Emergency Contacts” (Doctors in specific circumstances) and inform them of the situation. This will normally result in the parents arranging for the child to be collected from the crèche within one hour.

Staff members have the right to refuse admission into the crèche on the grounds of a contagious illness.

**(2.6) MEDICATION POLICY**

All medicines for administration to a child must be clearly labelled with the following;

* Childs name
* Type of medicine
* Date
* Dosage

A medication is a substance or combination of substances used to treat or prevent. Medications include: prescribed medication, over the counter medication, alternative therapies, vitamins and mineral supplements.

Medications are not given in the service except by arrangement with the management and/or staff members.

**(2.7) VACCINATION POLICY**

To enable a child to attend the service, he/she must have the recommended immunisations as outlined in the National Childhood Immunisation Programme.

This includes the MMR Vaccine.

Parents must provide information to indicate that vaccines have been received on their enrolment form.

**(2.8) ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

If a child has an accident while attending the crèche, appropriate action is taken and the child’s needs are seen to immediately. The Accident/Incident is written up in the Accident/Incident report book and the parents are always informed at collection time. They are then asked to sign off on the report if they are happy to do so, or if they would like a copy. If more immediate action is required-such as going to the Doctor or Hospital- then emergency Protocol is followed.

**(2.9) HEALTHY EATING**

The crèche operates a healthy eating policy. Children attending part-time and full-time at the crèche will be provided with a wholesome freshly prepared dinner. There is a varied menu which is available to view on request.

Your child is only allowed healthy snacks while attending the crèche. Snacks **not allowed** include crisps, bars, buns, sweets, biscuits, popcorn and nuts (choking/allergy hazard). Grapes are allowed if cut in half. Water is the preferred drink, but children are allowed to bring in low sugar juices from home in a container. However no juice will be given to them within the crèche. If a child needs a drink, they will be provided with water or milk only.

**(2.10) OUTINGS POLICY**

Cappoquin Childcare Facility, recognise that outings are an important part of a preschool calendar. It is important for children to experience different environments and play experience. Whether it’s a walk in the park, a trip to the playground, a nature or annual outings staff must make sure that there is a procedure in place to protect the children in our care.

**Planning an outing:**

**Risk assessment:**

* A risk assessment of the destination must be carried out by a designated person before each outing.
* Has the outcome warranted a change to the outing destination
* Has a check list been developed for the outing

**Consent:**

* All parents must provide written consent. This must be returned to the service before the outing
* Each parent must be informed of the destination, method of travel, times of departure and expected time of arrival back
* Consent must be obtained for DVDs and photos

**(2.11) SECURITY**

* All visitors are required to sign in/out of Childcare facility and record the purpose of their visit.
* Visitors are to be accompanied by a member of staff while in the building.
* All exit doors to be kept closed at all times.

**(2.12) TOILET TRAINING**

Children that are being introduced to toilet training should begin at a suitable time for both parents and the child. It is important for the child to have a few days at home to get used to the different changes. The time off will give the child the experience and confidence to return to the crèche and be able to let a staff member know when they need to use the toilet. At all times a member of staff will go to the bathroom with the child, in case they need assistance.

Parents are asked to bring plenty of spare clothes, as accidents will happen in the early stages.

**3.0 Child Welfare Policies.**

**(3.1) BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Children will be-redirected from inappropriate behaviour by distraction and focusing on positive behaviour will be in place. Problem solving will be encouraged between children and staff members will support the children through this process.

**(3.2) CHILD DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The development of self-control is a fundamental part of our work with each child in the crèche.

**We encourage this by:**

* Praising all good behaviour
* Promoting self esteem
* Using clear simple rules that are appropriate to the child’s own developmental stage and age
* Providing opportunities to take turns, share, abide by simple rules in a game situation
* Being consistent with the implementation of the rules
* Acknowledging good behaviour and showing appreciation of it
* Using encouragement and words of praise at every possible opportunity
* Observation of the child will be central to all our behaviour management policies

**(3.3) BITING POLICY**

Biting is a natural developmental stage, that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty four months of age. The safety of the children at the childcare facility is our primary concern. The facility’s biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs.

The centre recognises that small children, for a variety of reasons and from time to time, attempt to bite other children. Due to the speed and randomness with which biting incidents occurs, it is not always possible to prevent these from happening.

THE FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN A CHILD IS BITTEN-UNBROKEN SKIN

1. Assess the bitten area and clean with soap and water.
2. Comfort the child.
3. If the area is swollen apply ice.
4. Observe the child for the rest of the day.

THE FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN A CHILD IS BITTEN AND THE SKIN IS BROKEN

1. Assess the bitten area and clean with an antiseptic wipe.
2. Comfort the child.
3. Check immunization records of both children looking to see if their tetanus (Dtap) and hepatitis B (Hib) vaccines are up to date.
4. Notify the parents of both children immediately.
5. File an incident report as outlined above.
6. Liaise with both parents throughout this time.
7. Recommend to parents/guardians that both children are assessed by their medical doctors.

Methods for minimising incident of biting

Attempt to keep frustration levels low for children by providing several of each toy, having smaller groups of children, e.g indoor group/outdoor group.

Use distraction techniques to minimise incidents, provide a new environment for the biter, move the child away to a new activity.

**(3.4) CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is the policy of Cappoquin Community Childcare not to discuss details of any Child or family outside the service. To do so would invoke the disciplinary procedure as outlined in the contract of employment.

Confidential information is shared only with the staff members who need the information to effectively perform their job.

Both parents and staff have a right to examine their “own” files.

In the event of a suspicion of child abuse, the designated person in the service will contact the Túsla, or if the suspicion of abuse comes to a staff member’s attention, the Gardaí may be contacted directly.

Parents cannot be guaranteed confidentiality if a suspected abuse has been reported.

All records of children and information supplied by parents are kept in a confidential file, and are not seen by anyone other than staff members, parents (own child’s details) and the Preschool Service Officer.

**(3.5) OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We welcome parents into the crèche at any time during the day if they so wish. However if a parent wishes to meet with their childs supervisor, we recommend that you make an appointment in advance.

Parents are consulted and given regular information on the progress of their children, and are free to contribute their views on their child’s progress and behaviour.

The staff and management of the crèche enjoy a strong relationship with a number of agencies. We are members of Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) and Waterford Childcare Committee. These agencies assist us in achieving and striving towards excellence in childcare, through on-going training and keeping us up to date with changing trends and legislation in childcare – all in the best interests of children in our care.

We comply with all pre-school regulations as enforced by the HSE Preschool Services Officer who inspects our service on a regular basis and with all other relevant legislation.

On rare occasions where there may be concerns regarding a child’s welfare, the manager may discuss the issue with the parent. The crèche fully complies with the "Children First" document. If the matter is not resolved, the crèche may deem it necessary to contact the HSE.

**(3.6) CHILD OBSERVATIONS POLICY**

In the crèche we continually observe all children. These observations are noted and kept on a child’s record form.

If a staff member makes an observation – such as a hearing defect for example – then this is immediately discussed with the parents.

**(3.7) COMPLIMENTS/COMPLAINTS**

If you feel that you would like to pass on compliments, please feel free to do so by advising a room leader or staff members’ or by placing a note in the suggestion box, or by post.

It is only by knowing what we do well that we can improve the service in the crèche.

We are aware that there are times when we will not always get it right.

Also we would ask you to bring any complaints you may have to our attention, by ensuring that we hear about it in the office. If you feel for some reason you cannot come directly to us, you can post a note in the suggestion box inside the front door. It is our policy to follow up on any such complaints immediately. If you are not satisfied you should make your complaints known in person, to the manager.

**(3.8) INCLUSION POLICY**

**Spiritual, Cultural, Social and Moral Values**

Growth in spiritual, moral and cultural values is encouraged by-

* Providing an environment where the children feel safe and secure
* Constant implementation of the Centre’s rules
* Learning to share and respect the property of others
* Celebrating festivals from a variety of cultures
* Having respect and knowledge of other cultures
* Displaying grace and courtesy as an on-going lesson where the children learn to treat each individual with respect and kindness

**Integration of children with special needs**

The crèche is committed to the integration of children with mild special needs. We believe that the development of young children with disabilities is more likely to be enhanced through attending services for ALL children.

We ensure that the physical environment is appropriate (e.g. Wheelchair access). Staff members will be trained where necessary.

**(3.9) ANTI-BIAS DISCRIMINATION APPROACH POLICY**

In this service, we embrace what is detailed in Article 29 and 30 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. An anti-bias approach, unlike multi-cultural or inter-cultural approach, incorporates cultural issues but broadens to the area of class, language, religion, gender, disability etc, where all areas of diversity are recognised and respected and skills are offered to help children deal with negativity. The underlying intent of an anti-bias approach is to foster the development of children and adults to become critical thinkers and to be active in building a more caring, just and diverse community and society for all.

In concurrence also with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we always endeavour to listen/interpret to what each child is trying to tell us, so that we may be able to respond to the individual needs of each child.

**(3.10) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

Parental involvement is an integral part of this service. The policy in this service is based on an understanding of the importance of developing a partnership between parents and staff in the best interests of their child.

PROCEDURES

* We encourage parents, to give us their feedback about our service.
* We invite parents to come with us on outings, as without their assistance, we may not be able to comply with child/staff ratios.
* We have an ‘Open Day’ for Parents before their child comes for the first time to our service. We operate an ‘Open Door’ policy where parents are welcome to call in at any time.
* All staff members have a spirit of openness with parents and will keep parents informed about their child’s development at regular intervals.
* We ask parents from different professions to come in and talk to the children about what they do.

By making parents aware of our Policies and Procedures with regard to all children in our care, we are offering our support to Parents in their primary role as carers for their children, while also encouraging a partnership approach, in the best interests of their child.

**(3.11) TRANSITIONS**

Staff are trained to observe children and will be sensitive to any changes in their behaviour and personality.

Parents/Guardians will inform a member of staff of any changes in the home environment that may impact on their child, so staff can be aware of the reasons behind any potential changes in a child's character.

We liaise with the local primary school to make the progression to formal education as seamless as possible for the child.

**(3.12) SOCIAL MEDIA**

Photographs of children other than parents/guardians own children taken at Cappoquin Community Childcare may not be uploaded to any social media without the express permission of the parents/guardians of those children.

On enrolment parents will asked to sign a permission slip allowing photographs of their child to be used by Cappoquin Community Childcare for observation and documentation of children's work. These may be put in the papers or on our website or social media page.

**(3.13) ITEMS FROM HOME**

* All items brought to the crèche must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
* Parents/Guardians are responsible to collect items each day.
* **Toys from home are strictly forbidden.**