

## COVID 19 Confidentiality Policy & Agreement for Parents/Guardians

Our service continues to work hard to ensure that the daily implementation of Covid-19 safety measures and practices carried out on daily basis and are maintained to the highest possible standards. These safety requirements are underpinned carefully by the incorporated information our service(s) have received since March 2020 from the following seven main advisory bodies:

- The National Public Health Emergency Information Team (NPHEIT)
- The government's Return to Work Safely Protocol (COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers)
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
- Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Health, Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC)
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI)
- TUSLA (The Child and Family Agency)

Our service is committed to adapting and developing our policies, safety practices and procedures as these guidelines and information relating to Covid-19 continue to evolve.

### **Reducing the Risk Together**

While there is no known way to completely eliminate the risk of the transmission of Covid-19, the risk of transmission/spread of the virus can be greatly reduced by the safety measures, practices and procedures we have put in place in our setting. This effort extends to the continued cooperation from parents and/or guardians in following the general Public Health Guidance and new safety policies and procedures we have put in place. We continue to rely on communication and cooperation from parents/guardians to continue to reduce the risk together.

### **Possible Risk**

There always remains, however, the possibility that Covid-19 may enter any setting at any time. Since any person, including a young child, can be 'asymptomatic' (a carrier of the Covid-19 virus but who continues to feel, seem and appear well), or with symptoms possibly presenting on or after day 14 of the person being contagious, it is possible for the Covid-19 virus to accidentally transmit into any childcare setting before there are any noticeable signs or warnings. We have a detailed step-by-step professional Policy and Response Plan in place to deal sensitively and efficiently with any suspected or confirmed cases of the presence of Covid-19 in our setting. These procedures prioritise general Covid-related safety, and the prevention and/or containment of possible spread with immediate effect.

### **Our Joint Responses to a Suspected Case**

Should a suspected case arise in either a staff member or a child within the service, immediate arrangements will be made for them to promptly return and stay home until further notice. Parents/guardians of a children who has suspected Covid-19 (with symptoms such as any kind of cough, runny nose, fever over 38 degrees Celsius, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea) will be required to contact their GP promptly for further medical advice and possible referral for coronavirus testing.

Likewise, any staff member presenting with symptoms of Covid-19 will be required to leave the service immediately and contact their GP promptly for medical advice and referral coronavirus testing. Our immediate Response Plan and procedures in place ensure that infection control is carried out to the best possible standards while maintaining a calm, professional and wholly child-centred approach.

### **Mutual Confidentiality/Privacy around a Suspected case**

In the same way we work to protect the privacy of and maintain strict confidentiality around any child and/or parent/guardian in our setting, we kindly and officially request the same of parents/guardians in responding to any information you might officially or unofficially receive around suspected or confirmed cases among children or staff. Until a confirmed positive case of Covid-19 is received, we will take all in-house safety and preventative actions in line with our Policy and Response Plan to ensure the highest standards of infection control and disinfection are carried out immediately, while continuing to maintain a child-centred and professional approach with minimal disruption to the children's daily routines. While parents/guardians are free to keep their child home at their own discretion as a preventative measure, we request that confidentiality and privacy towards our setting, children and staff is strictly maintained. Staff and/or Management are not obliged to officially inform parents/guardians of any suspected cases that might arise.

### **Our Joint Responses to a Confirmed Case**

In the case where a positive result for Covid-19 has been officially received, our service will take all appropriate measures (immediate contact with the parent/guardian of each child who has been exposed to possible risk of transmission, immediate arrangements for the closure of the relevant contact Pod, or multiple Pods, depending on the lines of contact tracing). In the case where the person who has tested positive for Covid-19 (who will and should remain anonymous) has been in direct contact with multiple pods, all of these will be included promptly in the contact tracing procedure and closed for the required period. Parents/guardians will be advised to contact their GPs for professional medical advice and possible referral for coronavirus testing. Parents/guardians will be provided with all relevant information and advice on our service. Confirmed Case Policy and Procedures and will be kept relevantly informed insofar as is possible during any closure period.

With the Response Plan we have in place to deal with a confirmed positive case, we will do everything possible to ensure that best practice is maintained and strictly followed, as well as continuing to support families and children throughout any closure period insofar as is possible.

### **Mutual Confidentiality/Privacy around a Confirmed Case**

We kindly and officially ask that parents/guardians adhere to respecting the privacy and confidentiality of our setting, the children, and staff, should our service ever be required to take these difficult necessary steps. This includes setting an appropriate and respectful example to your children, other parents/guardians, to the local or wider community or by way of social media or press sources such as local or national newspapers. We ask that you respect both individuals and our service's

privacy by not discussing either any suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19 where it is unnecessary or defamatory to our service or any individual involved with us.