



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

What are Policies and Procedures?

What is a Policy?

A policy is a collective agreed statement of beliefs. It exists to protect children, parents and staff. It is a course of action recommended or adopted by a service. (*Barnardos – Supporting Quality-second edition 2008*)

What is a Procedure?

Procedures are the practices by which policies are implemented in the service – the way of doing things. The procedure is underpinned by the policy. (*Barnardos – Supporting Quality – second edition 2008*)

Why Policies and Procedures?

Policies and procedures help to provide a consistent approach towards developing services and to minimise misunderstanding. Policies and procedures also provide a framework for making decisions. By involving staff and parents in the development and construction of policies and procedures there is a sense of ownership and commitment to the documents. To maintain a high standard of good practice, policies and procedures must be reviewed regularly and changed accordingly to incorporate any new developments in the childcare sector.

- Written Policies minimise misunderstanding.
- People can predict how situations will be viewed and dealt with.
- Must be relevant and meaningful and need to be in context of individual services.
- Policy is a brief statement.

Who writes the Policies?

- Policies and Procedures for your service need to be developed by the Manager.

Where to Store Your Policies and Procedures?

- Copies of the Policies and Procedures should be easily available for parents, staff and volunteers. They can be displayed on a notice board or they can be reviewed on your enrollment evening. Anyone working in the service needs to sign that they have read understood the policies and procedures and will follow same. **The policies and procedures of a service is now a requirement of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.**

Why Review your Policies and Procedures

- All policies and procedures are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to reflect current practice. It is important to assess whether each policy and procedure is adequate to meet the needs of the service and enhance the quality of early childhood care and educational provision provided.

Below is the recommended list of Policies and Procedures within the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

List of Policies and Procedures Tusla requires a provider to have under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

- Statement of Purpose and Function
- Complaints policy
- Policy on Administration of Medication
- Policy on Infection Control
- Policy on Managing Behaviour [Supporting Positive Behaviour]
- Policy on Safe Sleep
- Fire Safety policy
- Inclusion policy
- Outings [where children attending the service are brought on such outings]
- Policy on Accidents and Incidents
- Policy on Authorisation to collect Children
- Policy on drop off and collections
- Policy on Healthy Eating
- Policy on Outdoor Play [where such play is provided to children attending the service]
- Policy on Overnight Services [where the service is an overnight preschool service]
- Policy on Staff Absences
- Policy on the use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices
- Recruitment policy
- Risk Management policy
- Settling-in policy
- Staff Training policy
- Supervision policy



Regulation 6-
Service safety
statement also

Relevant Legislation

The relevant legislation that is the basis for the development of these policies is:

- The Irish Constitution (1937) Bunreacht Na hEireann
- United Nation Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963)
- United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016)
- Children's First Act (2015)
- Gender Recognition Act (2015)
- Unfair Dismissals Acts (2015)
- Freedom of Information Act (2014)
- Food Safety Acts (2013)
- Equal Status Act (2000-2012)
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children(2011) & (2016)
- Carers Act (2006)
- United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006)
- Disability Act (2005)
- Fire Safety Act (2005)
- Safety, Health and Welfare Work Act (2005)
- Data Protection Act (2003) & General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, May,2018)
- Civil Registration Act (2004)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)
- Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act (2003)
- Children's Act (2001)
- Protection of Employees (Part Time Work) Act (2001)
- The Equal Status Act (2000 -2012)
- Employment Equality Act (1998, 2004 and 2011)
- Force Majeure Leave – Section 13 of the Parental Leave Act (1998 & 2006)
- Terms of Employment (Information) Acts (1994, 2001 & 2014)
- National Minimum Wage Act (2000, 2015 & 2017)
- Organisation of Working Time Act (Rest Periods 1997)
- Holidays/Annual Leave and Public Holidays (1997)
- Adoptive Leave Act (1995,2005 2006)

- Maternity Protection Acts (1994-2004)
- Payment of Wages Act (1991)
- Juries Act (1976)
- Data protection Act (DPA 2018)

Statement of Purpose and Function

This is defined in Schedule 5 of the Regulations. **“Statement of purpose and function”** in relation to a pre-school service, means a description of the service, including-

1. **Who the service is aimed at:** Preschool, Full day care, Afterschool.
2. The type of service provided is Full Day Care
3. The hours of the service - **8am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday**
4. The age range of the children catered for in the service is from **2years and 6 months up 5 years.**
5. The number of children that can be catered for in the service is **44.**

Our Facilities include:

- Well-equipped outdoor area
- Playground with safety surface
- 2 large, bright, spacious room
- Trained and qualified staff

Objectives of Happy Feet Childcare

To assist and enable the developmental needs of children in our care on a daily basis. We will ensure to listen to the voice of the child/children and focus on their ideas and needs to form our curriculum and planning. We aim to deliver a quality focused curriculum addressing the Principles of Aistear and Siolta framework. We operate an open-door policy to allow accessibility to members of the community. Happy Feet Childcare service operates under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. To promote a positive holistic experience for children/ staff/ parents and guardians that shares our ethos and values respect.

CHILDREN'S CHARTER

Statement of Intent:

Young children rely on responsible adults to care and protect them. Our staff are in a relationship of special trust - one that is powerful and important. We recognise that our role is multi-faceted, and we have developed this code of ethics to provide the best quality service possible.

Policy and Procedure:

This Code of Ethics is underpinned by the following principles.

- The well-being of the individual child is of fundamental importance.
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each child attending our service.
- We consider the needs of the child within the context of the family and culture, as the family has a major influence on the young child.
- We take into account the critical impact of self-esteem on the individual child's development.
- We base practice on sound knowledge, research and theories, while at the same time recognising the limitations and uncertainties of these.
- We work to fulfil the right of all children and their families for access to services of high quality.

Procedure:

Based on the above principles we have developed the following Children's Charter.

Children's Charter:

- Children's welfare and their rights to a secure, healthy and happy childhood are paramount.
- The experiences children receive in their early years are critically important in terms of future development.
- Children are entitled to expect that all adults will respect, uphold and preserve their rights and to ensure that their feelings and wishes are taken into account.
- Children should have the opportunity to make choices and develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions appropriate to their age.
- Children, parents/guardians should not be discriminated against, particularly in relation to colour, age, race, religion, gender, disability, medical conditions or background.
- Parents/guardians should be recognised and respected as children's first and continuing educators.

Complaints Policy & Procedures

Happy Feet Childcare work in partnership with children and families.

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2016 and National Standards for Preschool Services.

Complaints Procedure:

1. If you wish to make a complaint you should contact the Manager to discuss and, hopefully, resolve the matter.
2. Should you still feel that the matter is unresolved then the complaint must be put in writing to the manager.
3. A written acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent within a week of receiving it.
4. If the complaint is related to the behaviour of a member of staff, the staff member must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and be given the full details and the right to reply.
5. Parents/guardians/carers must be made aware that staff are informed of complaints made relating to their behaviour so that the procedure can be implemented.
6. If required a request may be made in writing to the owner/manager to have the complaint heard by a wider group. This group could comprise of the owner/manager plus external mediator.
7. Membership of this panel should not comprise of any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant, or staff member.
8. The person making the request should be advised that, they are free to bring another person with them to a meeting to hear the complaint, to act as a scribe/record minutes.
9. Following the request, the complainant must be facilitated with a meeting within one month.
10. An agreed written record of the meeting will be kept by the external mediator and, where appropriate, a formal letter of the outcome will be issued, within a reasonable period following the meeting.
11. In instances where the complaint involves the welfare of a child/children, the information should be made known to the relevant local Duty Social Worker, TUSLA Child & Family agency. In the case of a committee managed service, to the committee, through the chairperson.
12. If the complaint involves a Child Protection issue, the procedure as outlined in the Child Protection Policy will be immediately implemented.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Statement of Intent

It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare that our service is open to all families in our community. We are committed to operating open and fair Admissions Procedures.

Admissions procedures

- Each child must be at least 2 years and 6 months when starting at the service.
- Parents seeking to secure a place for their child must complete an enrolment form.
- A completed enrolment form must be lodged with the service prior to the child attending the service.
- Children will be admitted on a 'first come first served' basis, following submission of the enrolment form. Our returning families will receive a place first.
- A deposit of €10 is taken, in advance, when a child is given a place.
- Deposits are refunded in September/October.
- If there are no remaining places a waiting list will be drawn up by the childcare service.
- Referrals from family support services will be accepted provided there is a place available.
- This service is committed to offering access to this service, its facilities, to all adults and children, inclusive of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, membership of the travelling community and religious beliefs.
- If you wish to appeal an admission decision, please contact the Manager.
- If you are not satisfied with the reply from the Manager, you may submit a complaint using our Complaints Procedure.

FEE PAYMENT POLICY

It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare that our service establishes a fees list which are set at the beginning of each year at a rate that takes account of affordability for parents and of the sustainability of the service. Happy Feet Childcare incorporate schemes on offer from DCYA as per fees policies:

- The weekly fee for the service is €150.
- Fees must be paid weekly/monthly by cash (in a labelled envelope) or bank transfer.
- We are offering the following funding schemes: ECCE, NCS

- Fees must be paid even when the child is absent, except in special circumstances and with the agreement of the manager.
- Fee paying arrangements for holidays, bank holidays etc. will be agreed with parents at the time of enrolment.
- Parents will sign a contract agreeing the terms of the fee payment policy.
- In the event of a change in fees, parents will be given at least 4 weeks' notice.
- Arrears Debt: Please speak with the manager if you are having problems paying due fees.
- Weather Policy; Code Red Closures **no** Fees are charged to the parents.

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

In the event of a code RED being issued due to adverse weather conditions Happy Feet Childcare will act on the guidelines issued by the National Co-ordination Emergency Group and also the Department of Children & Youth affairs. It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare that the Health & Safety of all users is a priority under these circumstances. A risk assessment will be carried out on the day of re-opening to ensure that all safety concerns have been assessed. Please refer to Happy Feet Childcare in relation to fees in this situation.

ADVERSE WEATHER PROCEDURE

- **Happy Feet Childcare** service will act on the National Guidelines warnings in relation to adverse weather.
- If code red is issued nationwide due to Health & Safety concerns **Happy Feet Childcare** will not operate.
- Arrangements will be put in place for risk assessment following event, therefore allowing **Happy Feet Childcare** to reopen and meet contractual obligations.
- **Happy Feet Childcare** will notify parents and staff in the event of closure as soon as is possible.
- All warnings will be communicated with parents and staff so the appropriate guidelines and arrangements will be acted on as to **Happy Feet Childcare** service policy.

DROP OFF AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy.

Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

All Children arriving at or being collected from the Service must be signed in and out by either a member of staff or a parent/guardian or their nominated person.

Morning Arrivals:

- For their own safety, children must be accompanied into the Service by a parent/guardian or their nominated person.
- Parents/guardian or their nominated person are responsible for their children during arrival at the Service.
- Under no circumstances may a child be left unattended on the premises; this includes a child on foot, in a stroller or wagon, in a car or other vehicle or in any other situation.
- Parents/guardians or their nominated person gain access to the service by ringing the doorbell.
- A member of staff will register each child on arrival.
- Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that all external doors are securely closed for the safety of all the children when they leave.
- If a child will not be attending, we request that parents/guardians advise us.

Collection Policy:

- For their own safety it is the policy of the Service that no children will be permitted, under any circumstances, to leave the service unaccompanied.
- Children must be collected by a parent/guardian or their nominated person on time.
- Parents/guardian or their nominated person are responsible for their children during collection at the service and must accompany the child off service premises.
- Parents/guardians or their nominated person gain access to the Service by ringing the doorbell.
- A member of staff registers each child on collection.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to give the names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child. If the parent is late arriving to collect the child, the person in charge will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent, the person in charge will contact the other named persons to collect the child.
- A late charge for late collections will apply - **€5 for every 5 minutes or part of.**
- Children will not be released into the care of a person under the age of 18 years or to a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child. Should this situation arise, the staff will contact an authorised collector. If no one is available to collect the child, then the person in charge should

contact the TUSLA social work child protection team. Services are required to get proof of age for persons over 18.

- Nominated persons who are unknown to the service will be required to produce either a driving licence, passport or other photographic identification which states the person's date of birth so that the service can ensure that person is over 18 years of age.
- In the event of a parent collecting another child a prior arrangement must be made.

If the nominated person arrives in an unfit state

Parents/guardians/Nominated Persons should be in a fit state to collect their children. If a parent arrives in an 'unfit' state, for example under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the senior member of staff on duty will contact the other parent or nominated person as listed on the child's registration form (depending on authorisations and circumstances) or will contact the duty social worker or the Gardai. The child's welfare and safety will always come first.

Attempted collection by a person who is not on the child's records:

Children should be collected only by the adult/s named on the 'Collection Authorisation'. Should the person responsible be unable to collect the child, a text message from the parents must be received with the information of who is collecting including their name and relationship with the child. The staff member will only let out a child if a previous agreement is made with the parent prior to allowing the child to leave the service.

If the parents personally arrange this with the staff the telephone call may not be necessary, but signed consent will be required at all times.

If the parent has not been personally contacted to authorise the collection of their child, the child **will not** be permitted to leave the premises until an authorised collector, as recorded in the child's records, is available.

Late Collection of Children:

We understand that sometimes a parent is unavoidably delayed when coming to collect their child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care to cause as little distress as possible. Parents/guardians in this situation must contact the Manager to say that they will be late and arrange with staff what to do. Children are only released from the service to individuals named by the parent.

We reserve the right to charge a late collection fee for persistent lateness in collection of children. Our fee is €5 for every 5 minutes late, or part thereof.

Early Collection of Children:

We ask that parents/guardians to let us know if they or their nominated person will be picking up their child early so that we can have the child ready and minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

Late Drop Off:

We ask parents/guardians to drop children off at the correct time to avoid disrupting the group once they have started and so that the child benefits from the full daily programme.

Where a child is not collected:

In the event that child is not collected from the service after the expiration of 10 minutes after the appointed time, the Management will contact the parents/guardians by telephone to ascertain when they will be arriving at the service to pick up their child. Management will then make arrangements with the parent in relation to collection. Please note that a late collection fee of €5 for every 5 minutes late, or part thereof, applies.

In the event that Management is unable to contact the parents/guardians by telephone, a text message will be sent to the parent or guardian. If no response is received to this text message within 5 (five) minutes management will contact the parent/guardian's emergency collection person identified to the service to make arrangements for the emergency person to collect the child from the Service.

Where Management are unable to make contact with parents/guardians or the specified emergency person after the expiration of thirty minutes after the appointed collection time if there is no contact from parents/guardians or emergency person the Management will notify Tusla and An Garda Síochána of the position in case an emergency has arisen.

Separated and Divorced Parents:

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this.

- We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a Court Order is in place. However, we reserve the right to seek clarification of identity when one parent has not had any contact with the service, or the contract has been with one parent only and a second parent makes unexpected contact. This is usually in circumstances where a separation is happening.

- We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
- Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask parents to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there are any legal documents, i.e. Custody Order, Barring Order we would ask parents to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

Attempted collection by a parent who has been denied access in a Court Order:

- A parent who has been denied access to a child through a Court Order will not be permitted on to the Service's premises
- If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the Service, this will be viewed as trespassing. The Service will in this event contact the Local Garda.

By law, an unmarried mother is the automatic guardian of a child born outside of marriage. In some circumstances, unmarried fathers have automatic access. The service should be informed about access rights. Unmarried fathers will automatically become guardians of their children if they meet a cohabitation requirement. An unmarried father who cohabits for 12 months with the child's mother, including 3 months following a child's birth, will automatically become the child's guardian. This provision is not retrospective, so guardianship will only be acquired automatically where the parents live together for at least 12 months after 18 February 2016.

Late Collection of Child/Children from the Preschool:

Parents/guardians should note that due to legislative requirements under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and *Children First* – Child Protection Guidelines two members of staff are required to be with the child/children.

- Parents/guardians are advised to keep within their agreed time for collection of their child/children for the above reasons. We require that all children should be collected by the designated time in order that the service may follow health and safety practices to ensure that the Service may close safely.
- Please see the Collections and Arrivals Policy and Procedure.
- There is a **Late Collection Fee of €5 for up to every 5 minutes late** or part thereof.

Non-payment of Fees:

- Non-payment of fees may result in loss of placement.
- A repeated failure to pay fees may result in suspension or withdrawal of child's place until the matter is resolved.
- Any delays in payments must be discussed in advance and agreed with management.

Withdrawal of Children:

Parents/guardians sign up and agree in the Parents/Guardians Fee Agreement Form that they will:

- Give notice, in writing, that the child/children are leaving the Service
- Give 4 weeks' notice or pay 4 weeks of fees.
- Management also reserve the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from the service if they are not 'settling in' or adapting to the environment. The Management agrees to give 4 weeks' notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.

RECORD KEEPING POLICY

It is the policy of **Happy Feet Childcare** that records as required by the *Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2016* will be maintained and made available to parents and any relevant persons, to ensure the health, safety and development of all children and to promote the learning development of all children attending the service attending this service.

Happy Feet Childcare aim to do:

- We aim to ensure that all records are factual and written impartially.
- Under the *Freedom of Information Act 2014*, parents will have access to all records pertaining to their child.
- Any personal information maintained; relative to families and/or staff, will be done so in line with our obligations to the *Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003*
- Staff members will only have access to records of children in their care and will be used to inform staff on how best to meet the needs of each child and plan for further learning.
- The service will only share information with other professionals or agencies, with consent from parents or without their consent in terms of legal responsibility in relation to the welfare of the child.
- Staff follow *Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education guidelines* in relation to various aspects of record keeping within the service.

The **Staff File** must include the following:

- Staff information sheet
- C.V./Completed Application form.(There should be no gaps, all workplaces must be detailed)
- Job Description
- Proof of identity (passport, driving licence)
- Two written references (Validated)

Processed Garda Disclosure Form/International Police Check

- Training Record (for renewal purposes)
- Induction Sheet (signed by the Manager and Staff member)
- Copies of Qualifications and Training Certificates

Supervision Records

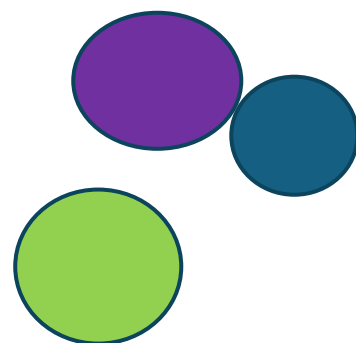
- Policy Sign Off (signed by the Manager and Staff member)

The **Child's File** must include the following:

- Child's Name
- Child's DOB
- Child's first date of attendance
- Date Child ceased attending the service
- Name, address and contact details of Parents/ Guardians
- Emergency Contact Details
- Authorised Collectors for the child
- Details of any Illness, disability, allergies, additional needs and areas for special care & attention
- Child's GP Details
- Record of Immunisation (photocopy of child's immunisation booklet)
- Parental consent for medical Treatment
- Parental Consent regarding observations, photographs, Facebook etc.
- Parental consent regarding outings

It is the responsibility of all Leaders/Assistants to ensure that the following items are displayed in the Children's rooms:

- Staff ratios
- Medical Conditions information (allergies etc.)
- Profiles and photographs of staff members
- Positive behaviour management strategies (age appropriate)
- Child Protection Reporting Procedure complete with Designated Liaison Person
- Emergency contact numbers (Guards, Fire Brigade, Social workers, Doctors Etc.)
- Cleaning Schedules
- Risk Assessment of room.
- Parents Contact numbers (for staff only)
- Fire Procedure
- Fire Evacuation Map



- Key Workers
- Temperature Control Record
- Curriculum Plan and Daily Routine
- Children's artwork, named and dated

Records Relating to Children

- Register of Pre-School Children
- A register of every child attending the service is maintained.
- The information on the register will be up dated on an ongoing basis.

Records Relating to Health and Safety

- Records will be maintained in relation to medical administration and accident report forms which will be co-signed by parents / guardians and staff.
- Written parental consent is obtained to allow the service to seek medical assistance for a child in case of an emergency.
- Information on children's allergies will be displayed in their play area and in the kitchen so that all staff are aware of allergies.
- The daily arrival and departure time of each child is recorded in the "sign in book" which is situated at the top of the playroom.

Records Related to Observation, Assessment and Programme Planning

Staff use regular observation and assessment as a means of supporting and planning for children's learning and development. Observations and assessments are recorded in the form of written observations and discussion, photos and the use of children's work. These will in turn be shared regularly with staff and parents to ensure a cohesive approach to ensuring the needs of each child are met.

A record of the planned programme / activities is clearly documented through short, medium and long term plans. Observations and assessment records are used to inform the plans and ensure that activities are suitable for the age, stage and interests of children in the service.

An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) may be used to support the individual needs of children.

These will be developed in partnership with parents and relevant professionals involved in a child's care.

Records of each child are available on the premises for inspection by

(a) A child's parent or guardian but only in respect of information concerning their child.

(b) Staff members with whom the information is relevant

(c) An authorised person e.g. Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate Team

Staff Records

A recruitment policy and procedure is in place and written evidence will be kept in relation to recruitment procedures for all staff positions.

- Records outlining the name, position, qualification and experience of each staff member, volunteer and student are maintained.
- Records are kept in relation to all documents and records relating to Garda Disclosure and references from previous employers for all staff members which are validated and on file.
- Written records are kept relating to staff appraisals and supervision.
- The daily arrival, departure and meal break times of each staff member is recorded.
- All staff records are strictly confidential.

Records Related to the Running of the Service Include:

- Details of the maximum number of children catered for at any one time.
- Details of the type of service and age range of children using the service.
- Staff/Child ratios within the service.
- An outline of the type of programme under which the service operates.
- Opening hours and fees.
- Policies and procedures currently in place.
- Daily attendance books of all children present in the centre.
- Staff roster.
- Details of any accident, injury or incident involving any of the children attending the service.

Records Related to Fire Safety:

A written record will be kept of

- All fire drills which take place on the premises
- The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises.

Records Related to Hygiene:

- A cleaning programme and schedule for furniture, work and play equipment is in place.

- Food hygiene practices are guided and recorded under the principles of *Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)* and the *Food Hygiene Regulations 2015* and the *European Communities (Hygiene of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2006*.

Procedures

- All records in line with the *Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2016* are reviewed and up to date and accurate at all times.
- All confidential records are stored.
- Parent, carers or guardians will be asked to co-sign the medical administration form and accident report form, when necessary.
- All records written and including reports are impartial and factual.
- Records in relation to Child Protection concerns are stored in a separate locked filing cabinet and are shared only on a need-to-know basis in line with the Confidentiality Policy of the service.
- All records will be retained for a period of two years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.
- All Garda Disclosure records and references must be retained for 5 years.
- All mandatory information will be displayed in one place for parents.
- In line with the *Data Protection Act 1998*, Personal information will be easily accessible for staff but will not be on display for others to see.

Happy Feet Childcare Confidentiality Statement:

Happy Feet Childcare is committed to keeping confidential information which they have knowledge of in relation to families and children, staff and volunteers associated with the ECCE service. Unless there is an obligation for the common good to disclose such information or the service is legally obliged to do so. The confidentiality policy and procedures of the service run in line with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of the service.

Policy

It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare to keep confidential all personal information about the families and children in this service. This policy exists to protect children, parents, carers, families, staff and volunteers, and to ensure that everyone using the group is absolutely clear about issues of confidentiality and what the group's procedures and routines are in respect of this matter. Personal

information about families in relation to Child Protection concerns will be shared on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. Management, staff, volunteers/students in this service will be advised of our confidentiality policy and required to sign up to it.

The confidentiality policy and procedures of the service run in line with the Child Protection Policy & Safeguarding Procedures of the service.

Confidentiality Procedures

- All new staff and volunteers will be informed of our confidentiality policy and procedures as part of their induction programme. They will be required to sign this policy as an indication they have read and understand it.
- Principles of confidentiality should be discussed by the service provider with all staff, volunteers, or students.
- Parents must be made aware of the necessity of keeping records in relation to the children in order to comply with the *Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2016*. The pre-school inspector will have access to files for inspection purposes, *under section 53 of the Childcare Act 1991*.
- Information, verbal or written provided by parents or carers is treated confidentially.
- The only exception to this may be when Child Protection and Welfare concerns arise in relation to a child. In this situation Information will be shared on a need to know basis in the best interest of the child.
- Information held in the service in relation to Child Protection Concerns will be stored in a separate locked drawer and will be shared only on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy and with Data Protection Legislation.
- Parents or guardians will have access to the files and records of their own children on request but will not have access to information about any other child.
- Children's records are kept in individual files and stored securely in a locked cabinet.
- Children's personal details cannot be passed on to another person or people without the parents /carer's prior knowledge and consent.
- It is not acceptable to discuss matters relating to the children or the staff or the service outside the setting.
- Breaches of confidentiality are dealt with under the complaints procedure or under the terms of employment as appropriate.

Confidentiality Policy for Parents, Guardians and Carers.

Including use of Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices in an Early Childhood Care and Education Service.

- Children are not allowed access to the internet within this service.
- Use of Photography and recording devices, has to be agreed by the parent/carer and the relevant form signed giving the service permission. This form is kept in the child's file.
- Parents may not post on social media, photos or recordings, taken in the early years' service or on outings, of other children, unless agreed by the other children's parents.

Information will be dealt with, with the best interest of the child in mind and in accordance with laws and regulations. Those who keep data about your child must comply with data protection principles as set out in the *Data Protection Acts 1998 -2003*. Other legislation relating to health and safety and employment will govern how certain records are kept and for how long.

When there is a breach of the law or Child Protection and Welfare concerns, early childhood care and education services have a duty to consult with the relevant agency. The service will be guided by the agency they consult with on how information will be shared and how confidentiality will be observed.

The Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection and Safeguarding children in the service is **Anita Flynn.**

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection and Safeguarding in the service is **Laura Sweeny.**

When the Designated Liaison Person is not on the premises, the Deputy Designated Liaison person will act as the Designated Liaison person for the service. It is the legal obligation of mandated persons to report child protection concerns and child abuse over a certain threshold to Tusla in relation to updated Child protection regulations December 2017.

*When the Deputy Designated Liaison Person is not on the premises, the Designated Liaison Person will be **Aisling Manning***

If a person has a concern for the welfare of a child they can consult with TUSLA or the Gardaí and this will never be considered a breach of confidentiality. People who consult with TUSLA Social Work team or the Gardaí with a genuine concern for a child are protected by the *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998*. This means they cannot be punished in law by being

sued. If you consult with either of these agencies regarding a child protection concern, you should check with the agency you consult with in regard to confidentiality.

If a child protection concern is made known to the staff of a child care service, the staff are duty bound to consult with TUSLA Social Work or the Gardaí in relation to that concern.

Employment Issues

Any issues concerning employment within the service are confidential. This includes information on salaries and /or salary scales; Disciplinary, grievance and / or complaints issues; personal difficulties that either Directors' or staff may be experiencing. Employees are also required and expected to maintain this standard of confidentiality when they leave employment with this Service.

Facebook

If the service has its own Facebook page, the Manager of the service is responsible for the information the service posts on the page. No pictures, comments or reference to an individual child will be posted without the expressed verbal/written consent of the parent/guardian. *If photographs or videos of any child will be displayed on the service Facebook page, the service must have sought permission from the child's parents/guardians prior to any posts going up on the Facebook page.*

Staff with private Facebook pages are not to post any reference to the childcare service on the page if there is a breach of the policy this may result in disciplinary procedures being instigated.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are staff member's private property. Staff are asked to leave the mobile phone in their bag. When at work contact with staff will be made using the service contact details. Staff will not take photographs or record material in the service using their personal mobile phone. If there is a breach of the policy this may result in disciplinary procedures being instigated.

However, staff members will take photographs on the work phone or work tablet.

Observations / Learning Stories

Staff at the service assess each child's learning and development. Photographic and written records of this are kept for each individual child and for the group as a whole. Both the parent and the child will have access to these records and they will be discussed with the parent/guardian and with those who inspect (Pre – School Inspectorate and Department of Education and Skills) the service to ensure such observations are undertaken. The parent's permission is sought at the start of the year to obtain and keep these records.

Events

Where group events such as a sports day or drama take place and parents want to record their child's participation in this, the expressed written permission of all parents/guardians/carers is required. Where outings take place, a group photo may be taken for identification purposes as part of the outings policy.

Child Safeguarding Policy

The Children First Act 2015 was fully enacted into legislation in December 2017. There are new legal requirements in the area of child protection for professionals and services with a key role in the lives of children and families. Early Years services and the people who work in them have new legal obligations under the act which include mandatory reporting.

Mandatory reporting of child abuse concerns and the requirement of early year's services to publish a Child Safeguarding Statement is now law. The Child and Family Agency has a primary responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of children. An Garda Síochána also have statutory responsibilities for the safety and welfare of children.

Mandated Persons

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. All persons carrying on or running a registered pre-school service and all who are employed in them as childcare staff are Mandated Persons. Mandated Persons will have a legal obligation to report child protection concerns over a certain threshold to Tusla.

You are a mandated person if you are:

- A person carrying on a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991.
- A childcare staff member employed in a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991

Child Safeguarding Statement

A Child Safeguarding Statement is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm. It includes a risk assessment, measures to manage any risks and a number of mandatory safeguarding policies and procedures. Early years services (including preschools and school age services) who employ at least one other person will have a legal obligation to publish a Child Safeguarding Statement.

CHILD PROTECTION SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

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

We are committed to child centred practice in all our work with children and full compliance with *Children First* (2017)

We recognise the right of children to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them.

Management, staff, volunteers and students in this service recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and our service will endeavour to safeguard children by appointing a designated liaison person. Our Service commits to:

- Having procedures to recognise, respond to and report concerns about children's protection and welfare
- Having a confidentiality policy
- Having a code of behaviour for management, employees, students and volunteers
- Having a safe recruitment procedure
- Having procedures for managing/supervising employees, students and volunteers
- Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents
- Having a procedure to respond to complaints
- Having procedures to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect against staff members.

As part of the policy Happy Feet Childcare will:-

- Appoint both a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Liaison Person for dealing with child protection concerns.
- As part of the induction process **all** staff will undertake Children First guidance e-learning course available on www.tusla.ie
- Provide access to training on Children first National Guidance for the Protection of Welfare of Children including child safeguarding statement to all staff, volunteers, students and members of the board of management.
- Provide supervision and support for staff and volunteers in contact with children.
- Share information about the child safeguarding statement and policies with families and children.
- This child safeguarding statement and policies will be shared with parents on enrolment with our service.

- This safeguarding statement and policy will be reviewed by the Manager each time an incident is reported or every 2 years if not sooner. Work and cooperate with the relevant statutory agencies as required.

Overall Responsibility of all Employees, Board Members, Volunteers and Students

Although the Designated Liaison Person has a lead on issues relating to the protection and welfare of children, it is the responsibility of all service personnel to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children in the care of the service. All staff, relief staff and volunteers are required to read, understand and sign off on the Child Safeguarding Policy. It is expected that if staff, board members or volunteers have any questions about the policy or its implementation they speak with the Designated Liaison Person.

We will ensure that all personnel:

- Are aware of their responsibilities and their obligations under *Children First*.
- Are aware of their responsibilities for reporting concerns and/or incidents regarding the safety or well-being of children to the Designated Liaison Person
- Attend child protection training as appropriate

This policy is applicable at all times when children are in the care of the service, including on day trips and outings.

This policy must be observed by (this is a suggested list – amend as relevant):

- Staff
- Special Needs Assistants
- Students on placement
- Visitors to the service
- Children (depending on the age)

Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect. For more information Definitions of Child abuse-

<http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/definitions-of-child-abuse>

Definition of a Child

For the purpose of this policy, a ‘child’ means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

Please refer to the link below for the Children’s First National Guidance 2017

http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Children First requires that every organisation providing services to children appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for reporting neglect or abuse. The DLP is responsible for dealing with child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with *Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children*.

The Deputy DLP will be appointed manager to undertake the below duties when the DLP is on leave or is unavailable for a long period of time.

Designated Liaison Person	Deputy Designated Liaison Person	
Anita Flynn	Laura Sweeny	

The Role of the DLP is to:

- Provide information and advice on child protection and welfare concerns and issues to the staff of the service
- Be accessible to all staff
- Ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments
- Ensure that the Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Statement of the service are followed.
- Be responsible for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of children to TUSLA – Child & Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána.
- Ensure that appropriate information is included in the report to the Child & Family Agency and that the reported is submitted in writing using the Standard Report form.
- Liaise with the Child & Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people within the organisation informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality.

- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the service, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
- Advise the organisation of Child Protection training needs.
- Maintain a confidential log or record of all child protection and welfare concerns in the service.
- Ensure the DLP and Mandated person work alongside to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF A MANDATED PERSON? (*Children First 2017: Chapter 3 and appendix 2 refers- All childcare staff are “Mandated persons” under The Children First Act 2015*).

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

Recognizing, Responding and Reporting Concerns about a Child’s Welfare or Possible Abuse (This section should not be changed)

Recognising Concerns

- Staff and/or volunteers may at times be concerned about the general welfare and development of children they work with and they can discuss any concerns with their manager and/or Designated Liaison Person at any time.
- All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in *Children First* (see Appendix (ii)) and the signs and symptoms of abuse (see Appendix (iii)).

In accordance with *Children First*:

- Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect.
- The Children and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.
- A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the Child and Family Agency.

- The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:
 - (i) *The safety and well-being of the child must take priority*
 - (ii) *Reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency.*
- 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.
- Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

‘A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by – (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.’

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

A concern could come to your attention in a number of ways:

- A child tells you or indicates that she/he is being abused. This is called a disclosure (see Appendix (iv)) for guidance on responding to a disclosure from a child)
- An admission or indication from the alleged abuser
- A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable
- Information from someone who saw the child being abused
- Evidence of an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way
- Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but an innocent explanation is given
- Concern about the behaviour or practice of a colleague.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (DCYA 2017)

<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms> (Reporting forms link)

Roscommon is located TUSLA area comprising of Galway & Roscommon. The duty social worker is located in Galway.
Address- 25 Newcastle Road, Galway
Phone- 091-546235

Procedures for Responding to a Child Protection or Welfare Concern

- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending Child & Family Agency intervention. In the event of an emergency and unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.
- If the child has made a disclosure, 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
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern the DLP will complete the Standard Report Form without delay and send it to the Duty Social Work Team in the Child and Family Agency (See below for contact details).

Duty Social Work Team, Tusla – Child & Family Agency	An Garda Síochána	
Child & Family Agency 25 Newcastle Road Galway 091-546235 (Roscommon Area)	Castlerea Garda Station Barrack Street , Castlerea 094-9621630	

- If the concern is urgent and the child is in immediate danger, the report to the Child & Family Agency will be made by telephone and followed up with the completed Child Protection & Welfare Report Form (CPWRF).
- In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.
- The DLP may use the process of informal consultation with the Duty Social worker to discuss the response to a child protection & welfare concern and whether or not it warrants reasonable grounds for concern. Informal consultation is carried out without providing the name of the family or the child. If advised to do so, a formal report will be made.
- The DLP will record information about the concern, informal consultation (if carried out) and details regarding if and when the parents were informed.

Duty Social Work

A list of all the duty social work teams can be accessed here:

<http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker>

Procedure when a referral is not made to the Child & Family Agency

- Not all concerns will meet the reasonable grounds for concern. In this case, the concern and any informal consultation will be documented and kept confidentially and securely.
- The DLP will inform the member of staff, volunteer or student who raised the concern that it is not being referred in writing, indicating the reasons. The DLP will advise the individual that they may make a report themselves or contact the Duty Social Work Team and that the provision of the *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998* will apply.

Informing Parents about Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

- Good 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.
- **When a child protection concern is being reported to the Child & Family Agency, good practice indicates that parents should be informed about the report unless doing so may put the child at further risk.** The DLP may seek advice from the Child and Family Agency Social Work Department in relation to this.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides protection from civil liability and penalisation by an employer where reports are made to Tusla or to An Garda Síochána reasonably and in good faith.

Responding to a Retrospective Disclosure by an Adult of abuse as a child

- In relation to retrospective disclosures, it is imperative that all child protection concerns are examined and addressed.
- An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. If a staff member becomes aware of a retrospective concern they should follow the reporting procedure and speak with the DLP. 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 the Children and Family agency without delay.
- Information about relevant support services may be provided to the adult if appropriate.

Confidentiality Statement

- The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of the staff in statutory and voluntary organisations involved with children to share and exchange relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.
- All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled taking full account of legal requirements.
- Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. They are not intended to limit or prevent the exchange of information between different professional staff with a responsibility for ensuring the protection and welfare of children. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect against Employees, Students or Volunteers

The protection and welfare of the children in the service are paramount and their safety and well-being is the priority. However, the service also has a duty and responsibility, as an employer, in respect of its employees. It is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an employee:

1. Reporting procedure in respect of any child protection and welfare concern
2. The procedure in respect to the allegation against the employee

It is recommended that two different people are nominated to manage each procedure. In small staff teams it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the parties.

- In general, it is the Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for reporting the matter to the Child & Family Agency (as per the reporting procedure) while the employer is responsible for addressing the employment issues.
- If the concern meets the reasonable grounds for reporting, then it should be referred without delay to the Child & Family Agency.
- To be reported to the Child and Family Agency the allegation must meet the reasonable grounds for reporting of a concern, informal consultation with the Child & Family Agency may be used to determine if reasonable grounds are present.
- All staff and volunteers in the service should be aware of who to contact should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any employee in the service.
- Written records are very important: If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure should be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it. Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written record of the allegation should be made and a written statement should be sought from this person.
- Where an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee while executing their duties, an employer should privately inform the employee of the following:
 - (i) The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
 - (ii) The nature of the allegation.
- The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond; the response should be noted and passed onto the Child & Family Agency with the formal report.
- All stages of the process should be recorded.

- An investigation may be required and the policy should note who will carry this out, the time involved and any appeal process. In small staff teams, independent, external parties may be called upon.
- Whether or not the matter is being reported to the Child & Family Agency, the employer is always informed of an allegation of abuse or neglect against an employee.
- Confidentiality: It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.
- Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures should be adhered to. It is very important to note protective measures are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.
- The employer should maintain regular and close liaison with the Child & Family Agency and or An Garda Síochána and ensure that no action by the service frustrates or undermines any investigation.
- Further action will be guided by employment legislation, the contract of employment, the other policies and procedures of the service (including the disciplinary policy) and the advice of the investigating agencies.
- *It is recommended that services always seek legal advice when dealing with allegations of abuse or neglect against an employee.*

Parents and allegation of abuse or neglect against employees

- Parents have the right to contact the Child & Family Agency to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about the employee or service.
- Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be kept informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.
- If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed their parents will be informed immediately.

Record Keeping

- Under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, accurate and up to date records in relation to children, staff and service provision must be kept. The Early Years (Preschool) Inspectorate will have access to files for inspection purposes.

- Parents may have access to the files and records of their own children on request but may not have access to information about any other child.
- Only employees involved with a particular child should have access to confidential files.
- Records are stored in compliance with 2016 Child Care Regulations.
- Where there are child protection or welfare concerns, observations/records will be kept on an ongoing basis and information shared with the Child and Family Agency as appropriate. It is important to note where these will be recorded and stored.
- Procedures are in place for archiving records.
- All records should be managed in line with the services Data Protection Policy

General Data Protection Regulator (GDPR)

Early years services have access and handle a wide variety of personal and private data in relation to stakeholders/ children and staff. This information all falls under data protection.

Early years services now will have increased responsibility under the introduction of the GDPR. Some of the requirements are relevant under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 but there are further considerations.

- Implement good practice in relation to your early years' service.
- Understand your services data protection principles.
- Understand and know how data protection applies to the delivery of your childcare service.
- Avoid common mistakes that could put data at risk.

Code of Behaviour

A Code of Behaviour is an important part of a Child Protection and Welfare Policy as it sets out the standard expected from all employees and explains what is acceptable and what is not when employees are working with children.

The Code of Behaviour can be used to:

- Explain to new staff how we work with children and what is acceptable
- Explain to parents what they and their child can expect from employees in the service
- Create a shared understanding of best practice
- Challenge an employee when practice is not at an acceptable standard
- Challenge parents when behaviour in the service is not acceptable
- As a Training tool

- The Code of Behaviour relates both to interactions with children and to what is acceptable between adults while children are present; it applies to all adults in the service including parents.
- The Code of Behaviour is developed in consultation with employees, parents and children (if relevant) and will vary depending on the age of children in the service and the scope of the service.
- Some headings that might be found in a Code of Behaviour:
 - Managing/Supervising Activities
 - Use of Mobile Phones and Technology
 - One-to-One work
 - Touch and Physical Contact
 - Communication with Children
- The code of behaviour should be included in the services Child Protection and Welfare Policy either in this section or listed as an Appendix.

Code of Behaviour

- We recognise the importance of a Code of Behaviour between staff and children as recommended in *Children First – National Guidance for the protection and welfare of children*. Our Code of Behaviour is kept under regular review. The Code of Behaviour supports all staff and volunteers to have a clear understanding of what is acceptable with respect to their behaviour with children.
- We recognise that children have an equal right to our service provision in line with the *Equal Status Acts* and the *National Disability Strategy*.

Happy Feet Childcare is committed to -

- Valuing and respecting all children as individuals
- Including the child/children with additional needs
- Listening to children
- Involving children in decision making as appropriate
- Encouraging children to express themselves
- Working in partnership with parents
- Promoting positive behaviour
- Valuing difference
- Implementing and adhering to all relevant policies to keep children safe

- Adult to child ratios in the service are 1:7/8 at most times of the day where possible.
- The Code of Behaviour is given to all staff and volunteers at induction and it is expected that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the code and that they will raise any questions arising with their line manager.
- All employees have a duty to adhere to the Code of the Behaviour and to bring breaches of the code to the attention of their line manager. Breaches of the Code of Behaviour are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Happy Feet Childcare believe children develop within secure and positive relationships, and positive interactions. This includes the other children around them, staff team and parental relationships. Supportive and positive relationships enable children to feel secure, encouraged and also recognised.

Staff are informed and educated about their role in the daily lives of the children within our care.

Safe Recruitment

Happy Feet Childcare will ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected in line with the Service Recruitment Policy and the Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2016. The following will be undertaken:

- Development of job description which outlines the qualifications, skills and experience needed for each post
- Advertising vacancies externally and as widely as practicable
- Prior to an offer of employment being made, two references from previous employers (including the most recent) should be supplied, verified and kept on file.
- Prior to commencement of position, proof of identity including address (passport, driving licence or ID card) will be requested and kept on file.
- Prior to commencement of position satisfactory Garda Vetting will be in place for all staff or volunteers.
- The development of criteria on decision making regarding suitability in the event of a vetting disclosure (Garda Vetting Policy) International Police Check where applicable
- Any child protection and welfare concerns that arise through the recruitment process should be dealt with through the reporting procedures as outlined in Section 3
- All new appointments should be subject to a probationary period for a stated period and a review meeting held before the post is confirmed.
- All employees will be provided with an employment contract.

Personnel File

An up-to-date and accurate personnel file is kept for each member of staff that includes the following records:

- proof of identity and that the person is over 18 years of age
- proof of satisfactory Garda Vetting
- two validated references, including a reference from the most recent place of employment
- verification of qualifications
- Investigation of any gaps in employment
- Completed induction record form

Induction, Training and Supervision and Support

Induction for new employees, students and volunteers:

- As part of the induction process, all new management, staff, volunteers and students will be briefed on all the elements of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy including the ethos of the service, child centred practice and the Code of Behaviour, within the first week of employment.
- All management, staff, volunteers and students will be required to commit to and abide by the Child Protection and Welfare Policy. They are required to confirm that they have read and understand the Child Protection and Welfare Policy with their signature.

Training on Child Protection:

- The DLP and deputy DLP will be released to attend *Always Children First* Training and/or other relevant training as identified and we will ensure that the DLP and Deputy DLP attend child protection training every 3 years.
- All management, staff and volunteers will be encouraged to attend child protection and other relevant training as identified.
- Staff will be provided with information in relation to particular skills training to encourage professional development and best practice.

Staff Supervision and Support

- Regular supervision and support is available to staff and volunteers, through one to one meetings or group meetings.
- Staff will be supported while dealing with a child protection concern and outside support will be sought where necessary.

Responding to Complaints

Policy Statement:

We work in partnership with parents by seeking their views and encouraging parents to participate in any decision making in relation to the service. We welcome comments/suggestions on the delivery of the service.

Procedures for Responding to a Complaint:

- We undertake to ensure all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly, impartially and confidentially.
- We will endeavour to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with parents and members of staff as appropriate.
- Parents will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation as part of enrolment/intake.
- If we find that we have made a mistake or that something could have been done better we will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in future.
- Complaints can be made by parents, guardians and other advocates on behalf of children.
- If a parent is not satisfied with any aspect of the service, they are requested to resolve the issue informally through discussion with the room leader /owner /manager.
- If the problem persists, re-occurs or the parent is not satisfied with the response, the complaint should be put in writing to the manager.
- Most complaints are resolved at this stage. However, if there are other or more serious issues arising from the complaint or it cannot be resolved then both sides may agree the need for a third party to mediate in relation to the complaint.
- Written records of discussion and agreements made will be kept of this meeting and copies made available to parents, room leader, or other involved staff (as appropriate).
- All complaints will be dealt within in a timely manner.
- If the issue remains unresolved the owner/manager will ask the parents to put their complaint in writing to them, a further meeting may take place and agreements reached will be written up and copies forwarded to parents and other relevant personnel (as appropriate).
- Most complaints are resolved at this stage. However, if there are other or more serious issues arising from the complaint then both sides may agree the need for a third party to mediate in relation to the complaint.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint the Disciplinary procedures may also be followed.
- If a complaint is made to the Early Years/Pre-school Inspectorate about any aspect of this service, we will co-operate fully with the Inspectorate to resolve the issue.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy. Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

A **hazard** is anything with the potential to cause injury or ill health, for example chemical substances, dangerous moving machinery, or threats of violence from others.

Risk is the chance that someone will be harmed by the hazard. It also takes account of how severe the harm or ill health effect could be and how many people could be affected.

A **Risk Assessment** is ‘... a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.’

[A Guide to Risk Assessments and Safety Statements](#) Health and Safety Authority, 2016

It is a written document that records a three-step process (HSA, 2016):

1. Identifying the hazards in the workplace(s) under your control.
2. Assessing the risks presented by these hazards.
3. Putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of these hazards causing harm.

A further two steps are also required:

4. Recording findings and implementing them.
5. Reviewing the assessment and updating it if necessary

Risk Assessments give details of the following:

- The potential hazard or risk being assessed
- The current controls
- Assessing the risk
- Additional controls if required
- The person responsible for implementing controls

Risk Assessments are completed to identify any potential hazards which pose a risk to:

- The service being well governed
- The health, welfare and development of each child
- The safety of children
- The premises being safe

The following risk assessments will be carried out and will be documented. Risk Assessments will show who was involved in risk assessment process

- Annual/Quarterly/Monthly Risk Assessment, as appropriate, of the entire building and operations.
- Daily Risk assessment of classrooms, sanitary areas, and outdoors.
- The risk assessment following any accident or incident.
- The risk assessment of outings and/or travel.
- The risk assessment of children with specific illnesses, conditions and allergies through the development of medical care plans.
- Risk assessment of individual children
- The risk assessment of pregnant employees.
- The risk assessment of any Garda vetting disclosures.

The people involved in developing risk assessments include health and safety personnel, management, staff and children's parents, where necessary

Risk Assessment of Individual Children:

Individual risk assessment is an assessment of the potential risks that might occur in relation to a child and their individual needs. It is completed if the individual needs of a child warrant it, for example, a child with allergies, medication requirements or difficulties relating to their behaviour. An individual risk assessment provides an input to a child's Individual Care Plan and is kept in the child's individual record

The Risk Assessment Procedure:

When thinking about risk assessment, remember:

- A **hazard** is anything that can cause harm for example.
 - Sockets left uncovered
 - No first aider on premises
 - Food being served without gloves
- A **Risk** is the chance (high or low) that the hazard will cause harm.

Identify Hazards:

- Walk around the service (outside and inside).
- Use a risk assessment checklist.
- Ask employees in each room if they can identify hazards as they may have noticed something.
- Check manufacturer's instructions to ensure workers are using equipment or materials properly.
- Check accident and incident forms – you may identify hazards this way.

What to do when you identify risk:

- Get rid of hazard (e.g. removing a mat that is a tripping hazard).
- Control the risk so that harm is unlikely (e.g. covering a socket).

Risk Assessment of Employees, volunteers and others.

We have in place comprehensive recruitment, selection and Garda vetting procedures plus staff absence, training and staff ratio policies.

Risk assessment documents will be kept for one year or longer, if advised by the Insurance Company.

Safety:**Employees Shall:**

- Take reasonable care of their own Safety, Health and Welfare and that of any other person or children in their care that may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work.
- Familiarise themselves with and always conform to, the organisation's Safety, Health and Welfare policies.
- Observe all safety rules and co-operate with their employers to comply with any of the relevant statutory regulations and directives.
- Use any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience or equipment in such a manner as to provide the protection intended for securing their Safety, Health and Welfare while at work.
- Conform to all instructions given by the management, and others who have a responsibility for Safety, Health and Welfare.
- Use only as intended the correct equipment for the jobs, with all appropriate safety devices and keep tools in good condition.
- Direct any suggestions or concerns on matters of Safety, Health and Welfare to the Health and Safety Officer.
- Report to the Health and Safety Officer, without delay, all accidents, damage, defects or issues of safety. This includes accidents or near misses, whether persons are injured or not.
- Carry out hazard checks in their own area of work daily.
- Participate in statutory training as required (Paediatric First Aid, Manual Handling, Food Hygiene and Fire Safety).

Employees shall not:

- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or other means or things provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing the Safety, Health and Welfare of persons arising out of work activities.
- Carry out any tasks, which they feel they are not competent to carry out, or which involves unreasonably high risks.
- Be under the influence of any intoxicants likely to affect their ability to work safely or to supervise children. **Please report any medical issue likely to affect your safety or that of the children or your colleagues as soon as possible to management.**

Managing Day Trips/Outings from the Service**Policy Statement**

Happy Feet Childcare aims to provide children with a varied and wide experience and from time to time the service may organize day trips and outings. It is our policy to ensure the safety and well-being of children during these activities through planning, risk assessment, management and supervision of the activity.

Managing Routine Outings

Happy Feet Childcare uses the facilities in green area in Knockroe/park/playground when weather permits. In managing and planning these activities we will:

- Inform parents of the proposed activity, method of travel and supervision in place.
- Ensure an adequate number of personnel are present and that the children are supervised at all times.
- Ensure that the person in charge will have access to the service mobile phone in case of emergency.
- A risk assessment of the venue/facility will be carried out and reviewed annually.
- Ensure that adequate insurance is in place for the outing.
- Ensure staff are familiar with emergency procedures.

Managing and Planning Day Trips/Outings

Happy Feet Childcare aims to provide children with a varied and wide experience and from time to time the service will organise Day Trips. The following will be considered in planning these activities. All trips and outings will be planned in advance and a risk assessment will be carried out with regard to the following issues: safety in regard to method of transport, facilities, activities, accessibility for children with additional needs and emergencies. We will ensure that the method of transport complies with relevant safety requirements and insurance. We will ensure that adequate insurance is in place and that appropriate staff/child ratios are maintained in line with the Pre-school regulations and the risk assessment. An outline of the details of the trip and related activities will be supplied in writing/online form to parents and written/online consent by a parent specifically for each trip will be obtained. Parents will be asked to provide information about any allergies that their child has. Where appropriate, parents may be invited to accompany their children on trips. If all staff are leaving the service, emergency contacts for all children will be brought on the trip. Children will be appropriately supervised at all times and the relevant adult/child ratios maintained. Safety Measures such as frequent head counts/roll calls at key stages, name tags, may be used as appropriate.

Managing Emergencies and Critical Incidents

A first aid box will be brought and a person with a First Aid certificate will be present. The person in charge will have access to the service mobile phone in case of emergency. The service does its utmost to minimize risk and ensure the safety of all children at all times. However, it is important that staff are prepared for any emergencies that may arise and in this regard, a plan to deal with emergencies (such as critical incidents or an incident involving a missing child) will be developed for each outing. Staff will be reminded of any relevant policies and procedures prior to the day trip.

Responding to an Accident or Incident

- Happy Feet Childcare will ensure that all personnel are aware of emergency numbers and that they are prominently displayed.
- We will ensure that all relevant personnel have up to date First Aid Training and that a complete First Aid Box is accessible.
- The safety and welfare of the child is always the first consideration if a child is injured or an accident occurs.
- After an accident, as soon as practicable, the accident Report Form is completed and recorded in the accident book/log.

- The manager/owner/chairperson is informed of serious accidents or incidents.
- Parents are always informed of incidents or accidents involving their child and requested to sign the relevant form.
- The Manager will review the accident and incident reports annually

Social Media Policy

A social media administrator is appointed by the service to manage social media engagement. One of their roles is to verify all social media posts before they are published online. Children in the service will not be engaged with on social media. In relation to Facebook, children in the service will not be “friended”.

Consent & Images

Consent is required from parents before an image of a child can be used on social media. Images of children are covered by Data Protection Legislation. **We will never** post an image of a child with identifying information. **No images of any child’s face will be posted without permission from the parents/guardians.**

Service events

We Request that parents/guardians do not share images of other people’s children online, most parents/guardians will be respectful of this.

DATA PROTECTION

- When information obtained process information accordingly.
- Ensure stakeholders know information is being held on record and also the purpose, it is only required due to law & regulations.
- Check relevant information adequate.
- Only obtain information for required timeline.
- In relation to personal information, give copy to relevant person.
- Amend any incorrect information.
- Ensure storage of data is secure & confidentiality applies.
- Remember adequate access controls e.g. virus protection, firewalls.
- Personal data should only be collected where necessary. Staff should only access data that is required for them to perform their job duties.
- Amend any information that is incorrect.

Any breach of data protection policy, either deliberate or through negligence, may lead to disciplinary action being taken and could in some cases result in criminal prosecution.

Data protection on behalf of DCYA for National Childcare Schemes

The personal information which parents/guardians provide in relation to the application process of Government funded schemes (PPSN numbers) are protected by the Data Protection legislation.

Communication Policy

Statement

Happy Feet Childcare will work in partnership with parents by seeking parent's views and encouraging parents to participate in any decision-making and development of the service.

It is the policy of this service to take seriously and give careful attention and a prompt and courteous response to any suggestions or comments to ensure the development of a high-quality pre-school service, which meets the needs of children and parents. All comments and suggestions will be dealt with fairly and confidentially.

An opportunity to highlight issues can prevent problems arising and if this should occur, the following procedure should be followed:

Communication Procedure

1. A comment/suggestion can be made verbally or in writing to the Manager.
2. The complaints procedure should be availed of if a satisfactory response is not received within a reasonable time.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Statement of Intent

Happy Feet Childcare service will work in partnership with parents, welcoming parent's suggestions, recommendations, comments views and complaints by encouraging parents to participate in decision-making and development of this service.

This service will take seriously and give careful attention and a prompt and courteous response to any complaints any suggestions, recommendations, or comments to ensure the development of a high-quality pre-school service, which meets the needs of children and parents. All complaints will be dealt with fairly and confidentially in an open and impartial manner. Parents and staff will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation and will have access to a copy of the complaints form.

Complaints Procedure

- Complaints should be made to the manager. They will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner.
- Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as amicably as possible and to the parent's satisfaction.
- If agreement cannot be reached the parent may make a formal complaint in writing to the chairperson of the service.
- The complaint is recorded.
- If the complaint is made against a member of staff, the staff member must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and be given full details.
- If a complaint against a staff involves a child protection concern a second separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our child protection policy and procedures.
- The parent is sent an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and told how it will be dealt with, by whom, and within what time limit. The person investigating the formal complaint will keep dated records summarising what has been said and done by those involved.

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome he or she may make a written request to go to the third stage of the procedure, which involves an independent mediator or panel.
- The panel may include an external mediator e.g. a representative of an outside agency
This panel will not include any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant or staff member.
- An agreed written record of the meeting and, where appropriate, a formal letter of the outcome will be issued, within a reasonable period following the meeting.
- The provider will ensure that a written record of the nature of the complaint and the manner in which it was dealt with shall be kept on file for a period of 2 years from the date in which it was first made. This should include the outcome of the complaint. All records in relation to complaints should be made available for inspection.
- Every effort will be made to resolve the matter within a reasonable period of time.
- The panel, having considered all the relevant material and talked with all those concerned, will reach a decision and if necessary, make recommendations. The complainant and other people involved will be informed of the outcome.

Code of Behaviour Policy

Code of Behaviour is a mechanism for putting the ethos of the organisation into practice and it acts as guidance for staff. The Code of Behaviour will be outlined in full within our Child Protection and Welfare Policy.

If there is a breach of the Code of Behaviour by staff, i.e. poor practice, the disciplinary procedure may be invoked by the management committee or owner of early childhood care and education service.

The Reporting Procedure

If there is a complaint alleging abuse of a child by any staff/volunteer etc. in the service, the reporting procedure to the social work department of TUSLA will be followed. Where any form of abuse towards a child is reported, the reporting procedure as outlined in our **Child Protection policy** will be followed.

Allegations of abuse against staff

If there is an allegation of abuse of a child by an employee a full investigation would take place and the 'gross misconduct section' of a disciplinary procedure in relation to the Worker may be followed.

Please refer to the services Child Protection and Welfare Policy which outlines the procedure in relation to allegations of abuse made against a staff member.

Whistle Blowing [Protected Disclosures] Policy

Purpose

This policy is to ensure that Happy Feet Childcare remains committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability for our staff team in all elements regarding their work when caring and educating the children they work with and while working with the families and the staff team.

Scope

This policy has been designed to enable all employees of Happy Feet Childcare, students and board members to raise genuine concerns safely and appropriately, and to disclose information which they believe shows malpractice or impropriety without fear of victimisation.

Policy and Procedure

An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to allow staff to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the Childcare Service. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of line management.

It is advisable to speak with your relevant line manager in the first instance if you have any concerns of malpractice. It should be noted that an allegation may have serious consequences on an individual's reputation therefore if in doubt talk to your immediate line manager for support.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety within Happy Feet Childcare. Once the "whistle blowing" procedures are in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use them rather than air their complaints outside the service.

Using the Whistleblowing Policy

The Whistleblowing policy is designed to enable employees of Happy Feet Childcare to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety in all aspects including financial irregularities, breaches of legislation, maltreatment of staff or children or any criminal activity including suspected fraud. The Whistleblowing and Complaints Policy are in place, and it is expected that staff would use the policies appropriately and that concerns/issues would be dealt with internally rather than externally given the provision of this policy.

Safeguards Protection

This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of the company who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made in good faith.

Confidentiality

Happy Feet Childcare will treat all disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Service Management.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

Untrue Allegations

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

Procedures for Making a Disclosure

On receipt of a disclosure regarding malpractice or impropriety the member of staff must pass this information as soon as is reasonably possible to their relevant line manager who will decide what action to take.

If the complaint is against a staff member the appropriate policy will be invoked (discipline, grievance etc.).

If the disclosure relates to child protection the Child Protection Policy of the Service should be invoked.

If the disclosure relates to irregularities, lack of governance or malpractice within an external organisation the Manager will refer this to a third party (e.g. funding agency, Workplace Relations Commission, TUSLA, Gardaí) depending on the nature and content of the disclosure).

Timescales

Due to the varied nature of complaints/disclosure which may involve internal investigators or external third parties including the Gardaí, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations.

STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

Happy Feet Childcare is committed to ensuring that recruitment procedures are fair, open and transparent and comply with relevant employment legislation. Personal information received is dealt with in the strictest confidence.

This service will ensure to have a designated person in charge and that persons must be able to deputise as required. This person must be named and on display for parents/service users in the service. The service has a clear management structure, identifying the lines of authority and accountability in the service, outlining specific roles and responsibilities of employees.

Happy Feet Childcare will comply with all the legislation in this area, including;

- The Employment Equality Act (1998, 2004 & 2011)
- The Terms of Employment (information) Act (1994 to 2012)
- The Protection of Employees (employers insolvency) Acts (1984 & 1991)
- The Holidays (employees) Act (1973 & 1991)
- The Workers Protection Act (1991)
- The payment of wages Act (1991)
- The Health and Safety at work Act (1989)

- The Maternity Protection of Employment Act (1981)
- The Unfair Dismissals Acts (1977 & 1993)
- The Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act (1977)
- The Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act (1973 & 1991)
- The Redundancy Payment Act (1967 & 1991)
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (DCYA, 2017).

Staff Recruitment Procedures

Job Descriptions

A detailed job description is prepared before each post is advertised and is available to all applicants. Each job description includes:

- Job title
- Location of the position
- Who the employee will report to
- Overall purpose of the job
- Roles and responsibilities
- Conditions of employment
- Person specification.

Applicants will be asked to submit application form/ C.V

The **person specification** outlines:

- Qualifications
- Skills
- Experience
- Other attributes required to carry out the job satisfactorily

Advertising

All posts are publicly advertised in local or national newspapers/social media/active link and state clearly that Happy Feet Childcare is an equal opportunities employer.

All advertisements will include the following:

- Name and role of organisation
- Job Title
- Brief description of the job
- Location of position

- Qualifications and experience which are essential, and which are desirable
- Whether the position is full time or part- time, temporary or permanent
- How to apply- email CV
- How to get further information
- Closing date for application
- Logos as required by funding contract

Short listing

The selection criteria are based on the information in the advertisement and the job description.

Assessment of applications is based only on information provided by the applicant.

- All applicants who meet the selection criteria are invited to attend an interview. An email of regret is also sent to all applicants who do not meet the selection criteria.

Selection Process

- Two references are sought one of which should come from the current or most recent employer. Both referees are contacted verbally by telephone and this is followed up with a written reference.
- Photo ID and original certificates of accredited training are sought before the successful candidate signs a contract of employment.
- An email of regret are sent to all unsuccessful candidates within one week of the interviews.

Garda Disclosure

- Garda Vetting is sought for all employees, volunteers, students and any adults who may come in contact with children in our service.
- Until the Garda Vetting form has being returned to the service and is on file, the candidate will not be able to commence employment.

Contract of Employment

- A written contract of employment is prepared for each new employee of

All contracts include:

- Commencement date of employment
- Duration of the contract
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Reporting procedures
- Salary
- Entitlement to travel and subsistence

- Working hours
- Annual Leave
- Details of sick pay
- Information on grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Information on codes of conduct
- Duration of probationary period

The services staff handbook will form part of the contract of employment.

Induction

An induction period is provided for all new employees. Employees are provided with the following information:

- Information about the role of Happy Feet Childcare
- Further information about the employee's new role
- Information on the role of other employees
- Introduction to key personnel and agencies
- Contracts of employment
- Details of conditions of employment
- Details of salary scales
- Procedures for claiming travel and subsistence expenses
(if part of conditions of employment)
- Details of grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Details of codes of conduct
- Copy of the Staff Handbook
- Full details of the Policies and Procedures of Happy Feet Childcare.

Employees will also be given the service staff handbook and asked to read and sign that they have read and understand all policies and procedures in the staff handbook.

Staff Absence Policy

Regardless of grade or status, the procedures to be adhered to when availing of sick leave/annual leave or any other leave are set out below:

In the event of sick leave- informing the employer/employees who are unable to report for work (or someone on their behalf) should contact their line manager or ring the main office and leave a message prior to their shift starting on the first day of the illness and give probable date of return to work.

Person in receipt of call must document the call and relay the message to manager/staff member in charge.

If an employee is suffering from a contagious illness they should not work with children and inform manager immediately.

In order to comply with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 staff ratio must be adhered to at all times, therefore if an additional staff is required the following procedure must take place.

(1) Contact Staff on Relief panel

(2) Ensure all staff on panel are Garda vetted and reference checked prior to taking up relief position

(3) If at all possible, contact existing staff team, who may be available to cover.

Support and Supervision Policy

Statement of Intent:

At Happy Feet Childcare we are committed to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to reflect on their performance and have their issues and concerns dealt with structured manner.

We encourage and support staff development by conducting regular support and supervision meetings and appraisals on a regular basis with all staff.

The record of appraisals will be kept confidential to the manager and designated persons within the service in cases of formal disciplinary or grievances, or when jointly agreed by both parties.

Support and Supervision Meetings

- Support and Supervision meetings will be held with all staff on a regular basis by the manager/ Leader of the service.
- A support and supervision form will be completed by the staff prior to the meeting taking place and will be used as the basis for discussion during the meeting.
- The manager will keep a copy of notes taken at the meeting for the staff file for each staff member, these notes are signed by both parties.
- At these meetings all aspects of the staff members work including personal development, training, conflicts, specific areas of work and the children in their care will be considered.
- Actions arising from Support and Supervision meetings will be followed up on at the next meeting.

Appraisals

Appraisals will take place at the end of probationary periods and on a regular basis from the date they began their employment thereafter. The purpose of the appraisal is to:

- Ensure that the requirements of the role are being fulfilled;

- Provide the employee with feedback on his or her performance;
- To ensure that staff are supported staff in their role, for example identify any additional training needs;
- Give staff with an opportunity to discuss their ideas and concerns.
- Review the employee's work over the past term
- Outline objectives for the term ahead.
- A review of the employee's job description will take place at the appraisal and by agreement of both parties, may be updated, if necessary.
- Employees will be fully informed of the outcomes of the appraisal.
- Both the manager and the staff member will sign the record of the appraisal meeting as a true reflection of the issues discussed and the decisions made.

STUDENT POLICY

It is our policy, to assist students in developing their skills in childcare. Students will work closely with staff, to develop a professional and child-centred approach to working with children.

Procedures for Students on Placement

- All students must be over the age of sixteen or in LCA/TY at school.
- As part of their induction, students are requested to read the policies and procedures of the service in staff handbook and sign to indicate that they have read them and understood them.
- Students are not included in the adult/child ratio and are never used in place of staff.
- Students are never left unsupervised with groups or individual children.
- Students are supported through regular supervision meetings. Support and information is also provided, if assistance is needed with projects or assignments.
- Manager decides on what information the students can have access to and what meetings they attend.
- Our service has ongoing contact with the relevant college.
- Proof of Garda Disclosure for each student is sought from the college.

STAFF TRAINING & CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Happy Feet Childcare is committed to the education, learning and development of all employees. To support this commitment for continuous professional development (CPD) for

employees, financial assistance with the cost of training or time off to facilitate participation may be offered at the discretion of the service.

Purpose

- To encourage and support employees in their professional and career development as part of their employment.
- To provide administrative guidelines to facilitate fairness and equality in the application of these general principles.
- To encourage staff to take advantage of training opportunities that are relevant to staff development and to the overall benefit of the service.
- To prioritise training opportunities that will enhance skills and qualifications of the existing staff team.
- The minimum qualifications and mandatory training required by the regulations must be completed before taking up other additional CPD/ courses.
- Opportunities for training and/ or promotion will be based on the requirements of the job.
- External training and attendance at conferences/workshops/seminars is encouraged and supported.
- To provide opportunities for internal training, for example staff meetings, workshops etc.
- Particular skills training, to fit in with the nature of the organisation will be provided as necessary.

Induction Training

- Each new employee will be provided with a mentor/colleague for the induction period, who will provide on-site support around implementing – Childcare policies and procedures.
- Opportunities for Mandatory training in Child Protection, Manual Handling & First aid will be made available to all staff.
- In line with the settings supervision policy all staff and unpaid workers will have regular meetings with their supervisor to identify and address their training needs.
- The management team will undertake a training needs analysis to identify gaps that need to be filled. This analysis will be reviewed on a regular basis, to establish what type of training is required, and if it is relevant to the work, the staff and the service.

HEALTH WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD

Healthy Eating Policy

It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare Service to promote a healthy lifestyle through prevention of illness and establishing healthy eating patterns. It is our policy to comply with current regulations including the Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) (No 2) Regulations 2016 and Food Hygiene Regulations. We encourage the nutritional and overall well-being of all children within the service. We aim to support children to develop healthy eating practices and a positive approach towards food in partnership with parents and families. We recognise the dietary needs of all children and aim to ensure that all children's individual, cultural needs and religious beliefs are met within their diet while attending this service. Mealtimes are a very important social aspect of the daily routine within this service, which provide learning opportunities to educate children about nutrition and the importance healthy eating.

Menu Items Allergen Check List

Note – Please state the name of the cereal(s) containing gluten* and the name of the nut(s)** in the appropriate column

MENU ITEM	Cereals*	Crustaceans	Eggs	Fish	Peanuts	Soybeans	Milk	Mustard	Mustard	Sesame seeds	Sulphur dioxide & sulphites***	Legumes	Molluscs
Breaded Fish	✓			✓			✓						
Potatoes Carrots													
Chicken Curry Rice	✓					✓		✓	✓				
Spag Bolognese	✓												
Pasta Carbonara	✓						✓						
Chips													
Chicken Nuggets	✓						✓						
Cheese							✓						
Sausages	✓							✓				✓	
Rice Krispies	✓						✓						
Weetabix	✓						✓						
Yogurts	✓						✓						
Pancakes	✓		✓			✓							
Ham	✓												

* Containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley & oats)
 ** Almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan, brazil nuts, pistachio, macadamia
 *** e.g. found in sausages, burgers, wine
 ✓ Means the menu item contains this allergenic ingredient

For more information on how your food business can comply with these legal requirements, please visit www.fsai.ie/allergens or contact us at info@fsai.ie

Healthy Eating Policy and Food Labelling Legislation

Food businesses will need to comply with food labelling legislation which was introduced by EU law in relation to non-prepacked foods. All food business serving non-prepacked food must list the potential allergens used in the food.

Who will this effect?

This new legislation includes and affects all early childhood care and education service that serves non-prepacked foods. It requires all childcare services providing food for the children to list the potential food allergens contained in the meal which is being offered.

Why is this information important?

It helps protect individuals from suffering potential allergic reactions or more dangerous going into anaphylaxis shock.

What allergens are included?

Food businesses which include early childhood care and education services, must label the 14 top food allergens which are in the food they serve.

The 14 allergens which must be labelled:

Cereals containing gluten, namely: wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan wheat), rye, barley, oats or their hybridised strains, and products thereof, except:

Wheat based glucose syrups including dextrose

(b) Wheat based maltodextrins

(c) glucose syrups based on barley

(d) cereals used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin

2. Crustaceans and products thereof**3. Eggs and products thereof****4. Fish and products thereof, except:**

(a) Fish gelatine used as carrier for vitamin or carotenoid preparations

(b) fish gelatine or Isinglass used as fining agent in beer and wine

5. Peanuts and products thereof**6. Soybeans and products thereof, except:**

(a) Fully refined soybean oil and fat

(b) Natural mixed tocopherols (E306), natural D-alpha tocopherol, natural D-alpha tocopherol acetate, and natural D-alpha tocopherol succinate from soybean sources

(c) Vegetable oils derived phytosterols and phytosterol esters from soybean sources

(d) Plant stanol ester produced from vegetable oil sterols from soybean sources

7. Milk and products thereof (including lactose), except:

(a) Whey used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin

(b) lactitol

8. Nuts, namely: almonds (*Amygdalus communis* L.), hazelnuts (*Corylus avellana*), walnuts (*Juglans regia*), cashews (*Anacardium occidentale*), and pecan nuts (*Carya illinoensis* (Wangenh.) K. Koch), Brazil nuts (*Bertholletia excelsa*), pistachio nuts (*Pistacia vera*), macadamia or Queensland nuts (*Macadamia ternifolia*), and products thereof, except for nuts used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin.

9. Celery and products thereof

10. Mustard and products thereof

11. Sesame seeds and products thereof

12. Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre in terms of the total SO₂ which are to be calculated for products as proposed ready for consumption or as reconstituted according to the instructions of the manufacturers

13. Lupin and products thereof

14. Molluscs and products thereof

Snacks

- Parents are encouraged to promote healthy eating by providing healthy snacks for children.
- Suggestions of healthy snacks will be made available for parents.
- Sweets, crisps, chocolate, chewing gum and nuts/nut spreads are not allowed.
- If children have allergies to certain foods for example nuts these will be not allowed to be contained in snacks that children bring in and will be enforced to ensure the welfare and safety of the child in question. The same will apply to any other allergies.
- Snacks such as fruit, yoghurt, sandwiches or milk/water will be encouraged as healthy alternatives for children.

Special Dietary Requirements

- All special dietary requirements are respected within our service, inclusive of dietary needs and cultural dietary habits.
- We recognise the dietary needs of all children and aim to ensure that all children's individual, cultural needs and religious beliefs are met within their diet while attending this service.

What Happy Feet Childcare Service encourages:

- A balanced diet is provided with fresh, nutritious food.
- Sweets, crisps, chocolate, chewing gum and nuts/nut spreads are not allowed.

- Special dietary needs of children are met. Parents are asked to provide as much information as possible, about suitable foods. In some cases, parents may be asked to provide food themselves.
- Parents will be informed if their children are not eating well.
- Special attention will be given to food provided to a child with an allergy, to prevent accidental consumption of food containing the allergen that the child is allergic to.
- An adult always sits with the children at mealtimes to encourage good eating habits, stimulate conversation and enhance the quality of and extend interactions.
- Children are encouraged to feed themselves, to help develop each child's independence.
- The 14 top allergens served in the service food will be noted on the daily menu board, for parents, older children and staff to be aware of. (See allergen policy)
- Potable water will be available at all times.
- Birthday cakes are provided by the service.
- Meals will be well balanced and provide a wide variety of food from the four main food groups.
- Staff will be encouraged to attend regular training programmes around health and nutrition.
- Parents will be informed on their child's eating pattern throughout the day a collection time.

Before and during snack and mealtimes

- All staff wash their hands (and children's hands) with soap and warm water immediately before serving food or eating. All staff must wear disposable gloves for the duration of serving food.
- Use utensils, not your hands, to serve food.
- Clean and sanitize counters and table tops before serving food.
- Keep food at safe temperatures before serving – 41°F or colder and 140°F or hotter.
- Do not put food on the table before children are ready to eat.
- After cooking, keep hot food hot (140°F or hotter) by continuing to heat at a low temperature. Do not turn the burner off and let food sit until needed? Leave cold food covered and in the refrigerator until just before serving.
- During snack and mealtime **do not** let children share the same utensil or dish when eating.
- A clean and sanitized utensil must be provided for each serving bowl and serving dish.

- Clean and sanitize utensils, tables and counters after every use to prevent contamination.
- Do not let children eat food that has fallen on the floor
- Do not let children use utensils that have fallen on the floor until they have been cleaned and sanitized.
- Dirt and insects on the floor can contaminate food and utensils.
- After snack and mealtime dispose of uneaten food that has been served but not eaten. Never put milk or other beverages that have been poured into glasses or cups back into the original container.

ALLERGEN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Roles & responsibilities for managing food allergies within a childcare service **Food allergies can be life-threatening.**

The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the childcare setting if:

Staff, children and parents work together to minimise risks of exposure to allergens and provide a safe ECCE environment, for children who have allergic reactions to certain types of food.

When to use an EpiPen

Anaphylaxis is the name of the potentially life-threatening reaction that can happen when you're allergic to bees, shellfish, peanuts or any other of a number of allergens.

Recognising the symptoms of an Anaphylaxis Attack. Not everyone affected by anaphylaxis will experience the same thing, but common symptoms include:

- Hives, itching, flushing and swelling of the lips, tongue and roof of the mouth.
- The airway is often affected, resulting in tightness of the throat, chest tightness and difficulty breathing.
- These life-threatening allergic reactions can also be accompanied by chest pain, low blood pressure, dizziness and headaches.

It's serious, which is why your top priority should be in avoiding known allergen (See Allergen Policy)

Acting fast is important. If a child or shows signs or symptoms of a life-threatening allergic reaction, administer EpiPen or EpiPen Jr (epinephrine) Auto-Injector immediately as prescribed.

A delay in administering epinephrine can be life-threatening. Dial 999 and seek medical assistance.

Responsibilities of the Family

1. Notify the childcare setting of the child's allergies.
2. Work with the childcare setting team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the childcare setting, including the playroom, the kitchen, dining room, during childcare activities, as well as an Individual Emergency Plan
3. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician.
4. Include a photo of the child on written form.
5. Provide properly labelled medications and promptly replace medications after use or upon expiration.
6. Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
 - Safe and unsafe foods;
 - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods;
 - Symptoms of allergic reactions;
 - How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem; and
 - How to read food labels (age appropriate).
7. Review policies and procedures with the childcare setting staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
8. Provide current emergency contact information and update regularly.

Responsibilities of the Early Childhood Care and Education service

Emergency care plan in place within the service –Include allergy/ Parents' permission/ Eircode

1. A letter from the child's GP/consultant stating the child's condition and what medication if any is to be administered.
2. Written consent from the parent or guardian allowing staff to administer Medication.
3. Proof of training in the administration of such medication by the child's GP,
4. Practice nurse, children's nurse specialist or a community paediatric nurse. (A copy of such proof of may be required by our insurance company).
5. Review the health records submitted by parents and physicians.

6. Identify a core team including the childcare setting's core worker, manager and kitchen staff to work with parents and the child (age appropriate) to establish an Individual Emergency Plan
7. Ensure that all staff who interact with the child on a regular basis are aware of and understand food allergies, can recognise symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, and work with other childcare setting staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the child's meals, educational tools, and arts and crafts projects.
8. Coordinate with the childcare setting manager to ensure medications are appropriately stored, and ensure sure that an emergency kit is available that contains a physician's standing order for the use of an EpiPen or equivalent.
9. Children should not trade food with others.
10. Children should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergens. Children should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
11. Children should notify an adult immediately if they have eaten a food that they may be allergic to.
12. It is the responsibility of the early years' service to ensure the child does not come into contact with any food they are allergic to. This can be done by monitoring food brought in by the other children for snacks.

The use of an EpiPen in an Early Childhood Care and Education service

1. EpiPen should be kept in a secure, (out of reach of children) but unlocked location that is easily accessible to delegated childcare setting staff.
2. Designated childcare setting staff will administer EpiPen in an emergency.
3. Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the childcare setting day, regardless of time or location.
4. The service must have a care plan in place if one of the children have an allergy.
5. Review policies and prevention plans with the core team members, parents/guardians, children (age appropriate), and physician after a reaction has occurred.

6. It is the responsibility of the child's parents to provide and replace the EpiPen and ensure the EpiPen they have supplied to the childcare service for their child is in date.
7. The service must ensure to discuss outings with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
8. The EpiPen must be taken on all outings the child is attending.

Procedure for administration:

The Educator must have received training to administer

EpiPen is administered in a simple 2-step process:

1. Remove blue safety cap by pulling straight up. Do not bend or twist.
2. Swing and push orange tip firmly into mid-outer thigh until you hear a 'click'. Hold on thigh for 10 seconds.
3. Seek medical attention immediately.
4. When the dose is administered and EpiPen is released from the injection site, the orange needle cover will automatically extend and immediately locks in place.
5. Give any used EpiPen to the ambulance staff to discard.
6. EpiPen and EpiPen Jr are designed as emergency supportive therapy only and not as a replacement or substitute for subsequent medical or hospital care. After administration, patients should seek medical attention immediately or go to the emergency room.
7. For the next 48 hours, patients must stay within close proximity to a healthcare facility or where they can call 999.

EpiPen Parental/ Guardian Consent:

I (Parent/Guardian's Name) _____, state that (Child's Name) _____ will/will not be bringing an EpiPen to service for the duration of the session(s)

I understand that by identifying that, he/she will have his/her EpiPen safely stored in this service at all times during hours of service. If the child does /does not have their EpiPen on them, they will not be able to participate in any activities.

I will ensure that I will supply my child's EpiPen to this service and to make sure that it is replaced if used, or the expiry date is approaching.

I _____ give permission for my child to be assisted by staff with the administering of his/her EpiPen in the case of a medical emergency.

As well, I _____ (parents name) give permission for staff in this service to administer the EpiPen to the above mentioned child, if he/she is ever unconscious due to an allergic reaction.

I have read and understood the previous information and I understand and agree to the above statement in full.

(Parent/Guardian's signature): _____ (Date) _____

Thank you for your cooperation. Please give the consent form to the Manager of the service, before your child attends the service.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Service Manager)

Immunisation Policy

When enrolling a child in Happy Feet Childcare Service, parents will be asked complete the immunisation section, in the registration form supplied.

Parents have the right to choose to Immunise their child or not.

Not all children attending this service may be immunised.

If a child is not immunised, there should be a letter from the parents and, if possible the child's GP stating that the child has not being immunised.

In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents will be informed verbally and written notification will be sent to parents via Text.

A dated notice informing all parents of any infectious disease outbreak will be displayed on our notice board.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases

Parents are asked to notify the Childcare Service, if their child has been exposed to a Notifiable Infectious Disease. (See enclosed list of Notifiable Infectious Diseases). *Please refer to the Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and other Childcare Settings*

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/lifestages/schoolhealth/File,13445,en.pdf>

Public Health Doctors are responsible for the prevention and control of Notifiable Infectious diseases.

On being notified of a Notifiable Infectious Diseases, we will contact Portiuncula Hospital At Ballinasloe, for advice, information and support.

Children who are not immunised

In the case of children not immunised, the parents will be asked to seek advice, information and support from Community Services.

If a child is not immunised, there should be a letter from the parents and, if possible the child's GP stating that the child has not being immunised.

Illness Policy for a Child

Here at Happy Feet Childcare Service we recognise our responsibility to promote a culture in which health issues are discussed in an open and positive manner to achieve high standards. The health and wellbeing of children is of paramount importance in order to enable them to learn. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment for all children we ask that you refrain from bringing your child to the childcare service if he/she is sick and/or displaying any signs of illness.

Purposes of this policy:

- To ensure sick children are identified while attending this service.
- To ensure sick children are cared for appropriately.
- To protect all children and adults from preventable infection.
- To enable staff and parents to be clear about the requirements and procedures when children are unwell.
- To prevent the spread of infection within this early years' service.

Guidelines we follow regarding a child who presents signs of illness

If a child is thought to be unwell within the setting, early years staff will assess his/her condition. This will be done in a kind and caring manner. The child may be distressed, so it is important for staff to remain calm and reassure the child. The Manager of the service will be informed of any child displaying signs and symptoms of sickness or if the child is sick.

We understand the needs of working parents and do not aim to exclude children from the childcare service unnecessarily. However, the decision of the Childcare Service Manager is final when requesting the exclusion of a child for illness or infection.

Decisions will take into account the needs of the child and those of the group as well as the staff of this service.

If the Childcare Service Manager or Deputy Manager consider the illness / situation to warrant immediate medical attention, the emergency services will be contacted to take the child directly to hospital and the parent / guardian will be notified at this time.

Happy Feet Childcare Service are committed to providing the highest standards of care for your child.

If you have any further enquiries or concerns, please feel free to request more information from our staff. We operate an 'Open Door' policy towards parents so please feel welcome into our service at any time to discuss any concerns about your child.

Our service prioritises the health and wellbeing of the children, and believe the child needs to be fit and well, to benefit from attending the service. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment for all children we ask that you refrain from bringing your child to the childcare service if he/she is sick and/or displaying signs of illness.

This is minimum exclusion periods as recommended by the HSE. The service may impose longer periods if it has a concern.

Chickenpox:	Until scabs are dry; this is usually 5-7 days after the appearance of the rash.
Conjunctivitis:	Exclusion of affected children until they recover, or until they have had antibiotics for 48 hours.
Diarrhoea:	48 hours from last episode.
Diphtheria:	Very specific exclusion criteria apply and will be advised on by the Department of Public Health.
Food poisoning:	Until authorised by GP.
Glandular Fever:	Exclusion is not necessary.
Haemophilus Influenzae Type B: (Hib)	Children with the disease will be too ill to attend the service. Contacts do not need to be excluded.
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:	While the child is unwell, he/she should be kept away from service. If evidence exists of transmission within the day centre exclusion of children until the spots have gone from their hands may be necessary.
Head Lice:	Exclusion is not necessary [if treated]
Hepatitis A: (Yellow Jaundice, Infectious Hepatitis):	Recommended while the child feels unwell, or until 7 days after onset of jaundice, whichever is later.

Hepatitis B: (Serum Hepatitis)	Children will be too ill to attend the service and families will be given specific advice about when their child is well enough to return.
Impetigo:	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 24 hours after commencing antibiotics.
Influenza and Influenza-like Illness: (Flu and ILI)	Remain at home for 7 days from when their symptoms began. Children should not re-attend the service until they are feeling better and their temperature has returned to normal for 48hours.
Living with HIV/AIDS:	Exclusion is not necessary.
Measles:	Exclude the child while infectious i.e. up to 4 days after the rash appears.
Meningitis:	Children with the disease will be too ill to attend the service. Contacts do not need to be excluded.
Meningococcal Disease:	Children with the disease will be too ill to attend the service. Contacts do not need to be excluded.
Molluscum Contagiosum:	Exclusion is not necessary.
MRSA: (Meticillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus)	Children known to carry staphylococcus aureus (including MRSA) on the skin or in the nose do not need to be excluded from the Child Care setting. Children who have draining wounds or skin sores producing pus will only need to be excluded from a Child Care setting if the wounds cannot be covered or contained by a dressing and/or the dressing cannot be kept dry and intact.
Mumps:	The child should be excluded for 5 days after the onset of swelling.
Pediculosis (lice):	Until appropriate treatment has been given
Pharyngitis/Tonsillitis:	If the disease is known to be caused by a streptococcal (bacterial) infection the child or member of staff should be kept away from the service until 24 hours after the start of treatment. Otherwise a child or member of staff should stay at home while they feel unwell.
Polio:	Very specific exclusion criteria apply and will be advised on by the Department of Public Health.
Poliomyelitis:	Until declared free from infection by GP
Pneumococcus:	Children with the disease will be too ill to attend the service. Contacts do not need to be excluded.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus:	Children who have RSV should be excluded until they have no symptoms and their temperature has returned to normal. Contacts do not need to be excluded.
Ringworm:	Children need not be excluded from service once they commence treatment.
Rubella: (German Measles)	For 7 days after onset of rash, and whilst unwell.
Scabies:	Not necessarily once treatment has commenced.
Scarlet fever:	Once a patient has been on antibiotic treatment for 24 hours they can return to the service, provided they feel well enough.
Shingles:	Until scabs are dry.
Slapped Cheek Syndrome:	An affected child need not be excluded because he/ she is no longer infectious by the time the rash occurs.
Temperature:	Over 38 degrees. Children must be symptom free for 48hours before returning to the service.
Tetanus: (Lockjaw)	Children with the disease will be too ill to attend the service. Contacts do not need to be excluded.
Tuberculosis (TB):	Recommendations on exclusion depend on the particulars of each case, e.g. whether the case is “infectious” or not. The Department of Public Health will advise on each individual case.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid:	Very specific exclusion criteria apply; your local Department of Public Health will advise.
Viral Meningitis:	Children with the disease will usually be too ill to attend the service. Contacts do not need to be exclude.
Vomiting:	48 hours from last episode of vomiting.
Whooping Cough: (Pertussis)	The child is likely to be too ill to attend the service and should stay at home until he/she has had 5 days of antibiotic treatment or for 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment.
Worms:	Exclusion is not necessary.
Verrucae:	Exclusion is not necessary.

Procedure

If a child has a high temperature, the following measures will be taken to reduce the child's temperature, before administering Calpol or any another temperature reducing medicine. (See administration of medicine policy)

Staff will:

- Loosen and remove the Child's clothing.
- Check the temperature of the room is not too warm.
- If a child is thought to be unwell within the setting it is important to assess the condition of the child. This will be done in a kind and caring manner. The child will/may be distressed, so it is important to be calm and reassuring.
- The Manager will be informed of any sick children.
- We understand the needs of working parents and do not aim to exclude children from the childcare service unnecessarily. However, the decision of the Childcare Service Manager is final when requesting the exclusion of a child for illness or infection in line with policies and procedures.
- Children with certain infectious diseases will be excluded for certain periods. If staff suspects that a child has an infectious disease, they will request that parents consult a doctor before returning the child to the Childcare service.
- If a parent informs the service that their child has an infectious disease, the service will need confirmation from the Child's doctor.
- Should a child become ill whilst at childcare service, the Childcare service will contact the parent or an emergency contact.
- While awaiting the arrival of parents, the staff will ensure the comfort of the child, taking appropriate action, which would include seeking medical advice if necessary.
- If the child is in danger, the staff will seek medical advice immediately.
- Staff will report any worries about a child's health to the parents/guardians immediately. Parents are responsible for keeping the Childcare service informed about the child's health.
- We recommend that no child may attend the childcare service while suffering from one of the communicable diseases and they should be excluded for the minimum periods recommended.

Please see guidelines to illness / communicable diseases.

- Your child should stay at home for 48 hours once the Diarrhoea and vomiting has cleared.
- All parents are informed if a child attending the service has a communicable illness
- For further information and direction on responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases we will refer to the HSE document “Management of Infectious Diseases in Childcare Facilities”. Or follow the link included <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/lifestages/schoolhealth/File,13445,en.pdf>
- Coughs and colds do not normally require the child to be excluded but this depends on the severity and how the child is able to cope with the childcare service routine. A child who is, or who appears to be unwell may be excluded.

Illness Policy for Adults

Policy:

Our service prioritises the health and wellbeing of the staff and believe the staff need to be fit and well to perform their duties. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment for all, we ask you to refrain from work if you are sick or displaying signs of sickness.

Procedure:

- Adults with a communicable illness should not attend the service.
- All parents are informed, where appropriate if a member of staff has a communicable illness.
- Arrangements are in place to provide relief cover while staff are on sick leave.
- For further information and direction on responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases we will refer to the HSE document Management of Infectious Diseases in Childcare Facilities
- Staff may be asked to provide a return to work note from their Doctor stating they are well enough to resume work.
- Coughs and colds do not normally require the adult to be excluded, but this depends on the severity and how the staff member is able to cope with the childcare service routine.
- If an adult is suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting the service requests that you remain at home for 48 hours, once the Diarrhoea and Vomiting has cleared.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases

When to contact your local Department of Public Health:

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

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

Notification should be made by a medical practitioner "as soon as she/ he becomes aware or suspects that a person on whom he is in professional attendance is suffering from or is the carrier of an infectious disease" (Infectious Diseases Regulations). Notification should be made by a clinical director of a diagnostic laboratory "as soon as an infectious disease is identified in that laboratory" (Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulations). Prompt notification is necessary to facilitate timely public health action. In addition to the above, there is a requirement to give "immediate preliminary notification" to a meningococcal disease) or if there is a serious outbreak of infectious disease in the locality.

Parents are asked to notify this Childcare Service, if their child has been exposed to a Notifiable Infectious Disease. (See link enclosed of Notifiable Infectious Diseases).

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/lifestages/schoolhealth/File,13445,en.pdf>

Public Health Doctors are responsible for the prevention and control of Notifiable Infectious Diseases.

On being notified of a Notifiable Infectious Diseases, we will contact Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate.

Parents and will be informed of any outbreak of infectious disease within the service. This will be done by one of the following methods:

- Verbally
- Notice Displayed on door of service

- Notice Displayed on notice Board
- Written note to all parents
- Text (whatsapp) or email.

Please refer to the Guidelines designed by Tusla to support early childhood care and education services in the prevention and control for Childcare Facilities and Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings

<http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/childcare/File,13444,en.pdf>

INFECTION CONTROL POLICY/ HYGIENE POLICY

Statement of Intent

Policy Statement:

Happy feet Childcare service is committed to the promotion of a healthy environment and a high standard of personal hygiene for all adults and children. It is the policy of the service to promote the take-up and completion of immunisation programmes. We aim to promote a healthy environment through the implementation of controls to prevent and reduce the transmission and spread of germs within the service.

It is our policy to comply with current regulations including the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2016 and Food Hygiene Regulations.

Principle:

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

Staff Procedure:

1. Staff must always model and explain the reasons for hygiene practices
2. Staff must be aware at all times that in their personal and professional hygiene practices and routines they are setting an example (modelling) for the children by:
 - Washing hands in thermostatically controlled hot water after using toilets, before and after handling food ideally disposable gloves suitable for food preparation must be used, after outdoor play/play with pets
 - Cover nose and mouth when sneezing /coughing.
 - Dispose of used tissues in covered bins
3. Staff must cover all cuts and sores with suitable dressings and avoid touching face, nose or mouth.

When dealing with spills:

1. Good quality disposable gloves and a disposable apron must always be used when cleaning up spills of body fluids. (Vomit, blood, urine and excrement)
2. Any spills of body fluids or excrement must be wiped up with disposable paper towels and hygienically disposed of in double plastic bags.
3. The area of the accident must be treated with brill blue solution, diluted according to the manufacturers' instructions using disposable cloths.
4. Supply of clean clothing must be readily available for children after having accidents.
5. Supply of plastic bags must be available for soiled garments.
6. After cleaning up a spill, staff must wash hands in a prompt manner and thoroughly with soap and water.
7. Staff must not care for another child until hands have being washed, even if gloves were worn.

General Cleaning

1. Mops for general floor washing are disinfected using rubber gloves and must be left to dry, mop head up and replaced regularly. Mops for different areas must be colour-coded e.g. red for Classrooms blue for toilets etc. Mops should be let air-dry after use before storing away.
 2. All toilets, surrounding walls and wash hand basins must be cleaned and disinfected every day and between sessions if there is more than one session.
 3. This service operates have a daily and weekly cleaning routine (with specific responsibilities clearly designated) in respect of floors, tables, playroom and outdoor equipment, toys and frequently mouthed objects.
 4. Dressing up clothes/imaginative play materials are be washed regularly.
 5. Sand pit is be covered when not in use and the water tray will be emptied daily and as appropriate between sessions.
 6. Washing up must be done thoroughly in hot water with detergent, using rubber gloves.
 7. Cups/beakers must be covered with a clean cloth, not stacked inside one another and where possible air-dried; a dishwasher is recommended. Damaged cups/beakers must not be used.
 8. All cleaning cloths, towels, etc. are changed every day. Different cleaning cloths must be used for kitchen and bathroom. A colour coding system should be in place with cloths to minimise the spread of germs.
- Any leftover food must be properly disposed of.

Infectious Disease Control:

1. Children and adults with heavy colds or bad coughs must not attend the early childhood care and education service. It is recommended that a child who has been sick during the night must not attend the early childhood care and education childcare service.
2. Any children of childcare staff who are ill must not accompany their parent/guardian/carers to work in the service.
3. Refer to the Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities HSE Website
4. Children with infectious diseases must not attend the childcare service. Information on exclusion periods are be provided to parents
5. A dated notice informing all parent/guardian/carers of an infectious disease outbreak/incidence will be displayed on the parent's notice board and all parent/guardian/carers will also be verbally informed.
6. Head lice infestation is a contagious condition, and when noticed in the childcare service must be brought to the attention of all parent/guardian/carers immediately.
7. Should there be an outbreak of Gastroenteritis in the Childcare Service consideration should be given to closing the service for at least 72 hours after any affected child has recovered.
8. A separate cleaning programme is required for the premises not included in the HACCP cleaning Programme in the interests of preventing the spread of infection.

Recommended Hygiene Practices

1. Anti-bacterial soap and disposable paper towels/hand dryer are used for washing and drying hands.
2. Cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that children's toilets are kept in a clean and in a hygienic condition at all times.
3. Disposable gloves and aprons are provided and must be worn during nappy changing, handling other soiled garments and when washing and disinfecting potties.
4. Adequate and suitable facilities for the safe and hygienic storage and disposal of soiled nappies.
5. A shower/bath/facility for washing, with thermostatically controlled hot water and a designated area for sluicing soiled garments must be provided in full day care services.
6. Adequate supplies of towels and spare clothes must be available.
7. Soiled items must be stored in a suitable, designated area which is not accessible to children.

8. Staff will treat accidents sensitively.

Animals:

Staff must ensure that:

1. Animals visiting the childcare service are free from disease, do not pose a health risk and are safe for children to be with.
2. For any travelling farm visiting the service, they must have insurance for their visit and all their animals

Pest Control:

1. All door and window openings to the food storage and preparation rooms must be effectively screened to prevent the ingress of birds, vermin and insects.
2. Adequate proofing must be made to the structure to prevent infestations of vermin and insects.

Facilities for Handwashing

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

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

Ensure wash hand basins have hot and cold mixer taps that are thermostatically controlled to deliver hot water at a maximum temperature of 43°C, to avoid scalding. Temperatures are checked twice a day to ensure they are below the maximum temperature and a recorded log of this is kept.

Wash hand basins should be accessible at all times. One toilet and one wash hand basin should be provided for every 10 toilet trained children, preferably en suite to the play areas

Basins are at an appropriate height for staff and children.

Handwashing products

1. Soaps

Handwashing with liquid soap and warm running water is recommended. Anti-bacterial soap is not necessary or recommended. Anti-bacterial soap may be required in food preparation areas. Ideally, liquid soap dispensers should be wall mounted and have individual replacement cartridges that are discarded when empty.

Bar soap is not recommended due to the increased risk of contamination.

A mild unscented liquid soap is recommended for staff/children with sensitive skin.

2. Alcohol – Based Hand Rubs

- When soap and running water are not readily available, for example on an outing, an alcohol-based hand rub be used (the alcohol content should be at least 60%). The alcohol-based hand rub must be applied vigorously over all hand surfaces.
- Alcohol based hand rubs are only effective if hands are not visibly dirty, if hands are visibly dirty then liquid soap and water should be used.
- It is safe to let children use alcohol-based hand rubs/gels, but it is important to let children know that it should not be swallowed.

Supervision is vital. It is also important to store it safely so children cannot get access to it without an adult.

- The alcohol content of the product generally evaporates in 15 seconds so after the alcohol evaporates it is safe for children to touch their mouth or eyes.
- Water is not required when using an alcohol rub/gel

Handwashing Method:

- Apply the required volume of the product to the palm of one hand and rub the hands together. The amount of gel used should be sufficient to keep the hands wet for at least 15 seconds.
- Ensure all surfaces of the hands and fingers are covered with the gel and keep rubbing until the hands are dry. As with any other household product or chemical, care should be taken to ensure that children do not accidentally ingest handwashing products.

Children will not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel. Avoid touching the area around a child's eyes just after using an alcohol gel as the child may experience a stinging sensation.

Administration of Medication Policy

Administering medication to a child is considered a high-risk practice. Consent must be obtained from a parent, legal guardian and or carer before childcare staff administer any medication (whether it is prescribed or non-prescribed).

It is essential that childcare staff have some form of professional development training or knowledge of administering medications, in addition to first aid qualifications to ensure that an adverse reaction to medication can be dealt with quickly and in a responsible manner.

Services should regularly review policies in collaboration with childcare staff, families, and if appropriate, children; and seek recommendations from recognised authorities.

The date the policy is reviewed should be clearly documented on the policy.

Policy Statement

Happy feet Childcare Service has a duty of care to ensure that all children are provided with the highest level of safety and protection during the hours of the service's operation when they are in attendance.

The service's Medication Policy reflects the following principles:

- safe principles and practices in the administration of medication;
- effective hygiene practices
- an acute attention to detail
- the maintenance of accurate records to be signed off by parents and staff
- All medicines are labelled with the child's name and stored according to instruction outlined
- Two members of staff the check that the correct medicine is being given to the correct child
- Up to date professional development knowledge of administering techniques;
- Up to date first aid qualifications
- Legislative requirements are adhered to
- Recommended advice and practices from a medical source
- Open communication between childcare staff, families and children
- The accountability of childcare staff when administering medication.
- Written consent on file from parents/guardians to administer medication to their child.

An Educator will administer medication based on the following principles:

- The right child.
- The right medication checked by a second educator.
- The right dosage checked by a second educator.
- The right method checked by a second educator.
- The right date and time checked by a second educator.

- Medication can only be administered when the service consent form has been completed and signed by the child's parent, legal guardian or carer.
- At Happy Feet service, medication is administered to a child by staff member or in some cases, with parental or guardian consent, medication can be self-administered by a school age child. When medication is being self-administered, children are supervised by childcare staff.
- The service will ensure that childcare staff are witnessed by a second staff member person when administering medication to children and that the witness will sign to show they have seen the medication being administered to the child.
- It is understood by childcare staff, children and families that there is a shared responsibility between the service and other stakeholders that the Medication Policy and procedures are accepted as a high priority.

Important -

'Parent' also refers to carers/guardians

Statement of Intent

At Happy Feet Childcare we will protect and maintain the well-being of all children attending the service. Happy Feet Childcare works in partnership with parents and children's health care professionals to ensure that the appropriate procedures are followed in the administration of medication in a safe manner to any child at the service. All prescribed medication will be administered by authorised staff members only and all medication administered will be recorded according to the Child. All medication will be stored in a locked press in the interest of safety of all the children.

Important - Children taking a prescribed antibiotic must be on the antibiotic 48 hours before they can return to the setting. This is to ensure that there is no allergic reaction to the medication and to prevent spread of infection.

Child Care (Pre-school Services) 7(b) Regulations 2016.

The Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Explanatory Guide to Requirements and Procedures for Notification and Inspection, Part II Regulation 7(b) Medical Assistance set out the requirement to have a protocol/procedure in place for the Administration of Medication in a service. The National Standards for Pre School Services, Standard 12.4

requires that a policy and procedures are in place for the administration of medication both prescribed and non-prescribed.

Procedures for Administration of Medication

Medication authorisation form

A medication administration form has to be completed by parents/guardians who wish for their child to receive medication while attending the service.

This form must include the following:

- Child's name who requires the medication
- Child's parent or guardian's name and signature
- Name of the medication
- Dose required
- Method of administration, for example oral, eye, ear, inhaled
- Time and date of administration
- Expiry date of the medication
- Special instructions, such as medication that needs to be administered an hour before a meal or before a child falls asleep
- Known family history to allergies involving medication. If so, what are the symptoms?
- The staff member who will administer the medication.
- The staff member who will witness the administration of medication.

Parents must sign and complete a medication form before any medication is administered.

Prescribed medication must clearly state child's name, dosage, date and expiry date.

Temperature Reducing Medication (Anti- Febrile Agent)

This service will only administer Calpol (paracetamol) or Nurofen (Ibuprofen) in an emergency situation. Medication request forms giving permission in advance for staff to administer temperature reducing medication must be completed by the parent/guardian. If a child has a high temperature the parent will be contacted before the administration of the temperature reducing medication and they will be asked to pick up his/her child.

Other methods to reduce temperatures:

The child will be offered plenty of fluids and chilled foods, such as ice pops and yogurt, to help cool the body from the inside out and to keep them hydrated.

The use of a fan-

- Again, you don't want the child to be chilled. Keep the fan at a low setting and have it circulate the air around her rather than blow directly on her/him.
- Remove layers of clothing so the child can lose heat more easily through his/her skin. Dress him/her in one light layer. If he/she shivering, give him/her a light blanket until he/she is warm again.
- Stay indoors in a cool place. Or, if you're outside, stay in the shade.
- No matter what the child's age, call the doctor if he/she has a fever along with other serious symptoms, like difficulty breathing or purple spots on her skin. These can be a sign of a serious bacterial infection.

Health Care Plan

If any child is prescribed medication for a condition such as asthma or eczema management, of this service will develop a care plan in partnership with the parents and health professionals involved with the child (if necessary). Health care plans will be developed prior to the child starting the service. If management think it is required, staff will attend training prior to the child starting the service to ensure, that staff meet the needs of the child's care appropriately and provide the level of support required. Every individual health plan will be reviewed with staff, parents and when needed health professionals involved with the child every three months.

Parental responsibilities

Prior to a child commencing his/her attendance at the service parent/guardians must complete a child's profile form. Parents/guardians must provide details if their child has any medical condition, emergency contact numbers, child's doctor's details, information on allergies and special dietary needs. Parents/guardians must keep the service up to date on their child's medical needs.

Staff responsibilities

Staff administering medicine must:

- Ensure parents/guardians to complete and sign an administration of medicine form.
- Check medicine clearly so it shows the children's name, prescribed dose, date and expiry date.
- Have evidence of the time the last dose was given.
- Adhere to all health and safety procedures for example, wash hands before and after administering medicine.
- Have a staff member present to witness the medicine being administered and counter sign to indicate that he/she has witnessed the administration.

Storage and disposal of medication

Happy Feet Childcare service should ensure that medication is stored and disposed of, in a safe way.

The service will consider the following:

- The service will have a cupboard in the kitchen, out of reach from children, where medication will be stored.
- Self-administered medications are also stored in a kitchen cupboard out of reach of children. There will be a designated place for the key to be stored at all times and a second key will be held by the Manager of the service.
- If medication must be refrigerated, the fridge is located in the kitchen to prevent children accessing the medication.
- Unused medication is returned to the parent to dispose of in a suitable manner.
- Once medication is handed over to the service, we will always ensure it has the child's name on it and check the expiry date.
- For non-prescribed medication, we make sure it is labelled and in its original packaging.

Sun cream application

This service will manage the application of sunscreen to children (Sunscreen must be provided by parents/guardians). The staff will only apply sunscreen to children with consent from the parents/guardians. If a parent/guardian does not supply suncream for their child, it is their responsibility if their child gets sun burnt.

- Each child will have their own sun protection cream labelled with their name.
- Hats and t-shirts will be worn for outdoor play activities.

Authorisation for the administration of rectal diazepam.

As the indications of when to administer the diazepam vary, an individual authorisation is required for each child. This should be completed by the child's GP, Consultant and/or Epilepsy Specialist Nurse and reviewed regularly. This ensures the medicine is administered appropriately.

The Authorisation should clearly state: When the diazepam is to be given e.g. after 5 minutes; and how much medicine should be given.

Included on the Authorisation Form should be an indication of when an ambulance is to be summoned.

HEAD LICE POLICY

Head Lice is very common among young children but can be dealt with if prompt appropriate action is taken. Unfortunately, it's always possible to catch head lice, no matter how careful we are. Children can pick up head lice just by coming into close contact with someone who is infected. It is important to know how to recognise the problem early and to know how to cope with it. This service will provide parents with information on how to treat head lice.

Procedures

- Staff will inform other parents verbally or in writing in the event of an outbreak of Head Lice. Staff should be tactful, discrete and maintain confidentiality.
- Parents are asked to inform the manager if they notice their child has head lice.
- Parents may/will be asked to refrain from bringing their child to the service until the infection has been treated.
- Staff should inform parents to check their child's hair carefully and regularly, and to use the treatment recommended by the public health nurse, chemist, doctor or local health clinic
- The importance of not sharing other people's combs, hats etc. is stressed to parents and children
- If more advice is needed, the service will contact the public health nurse.
- Outbreaks of head lice will be dealt with in a confidential and discrete manner.

If more advice is needed, the service will contact the Public Health Nurse or refer to (Management of Infectious Diseases in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings).
(Leaflets on Head Lice from the Health Promotion Unit can be handed out to all parents)

NAPPY CHANGING POLICY

It is the policy of our service and in the interest of the children's health and safety, that staff follow the nappy changing procedures correctly and that a high standard of hygiene is evident at all times.

Procedures:

- Children's nappies and other items are stored in individual compartments and labelled accordingly.
- Disposable paper towels are used to cover the mat, and for hand-drying purposes.
- Disposable gloves are provided and worn during nappy changing; however, this does not negate the need for hand washing.
- Soiled nappies are bagged and disposed of hygienically i.e. sanitising unit or binned and removed from the nappy changing area
- The nappy changing mat is disinfected after every use.
- Anti-bacterial soap is provided for hand washing.
- Children are never left unattended when having their nappy changed.
- If required another staff member is always available to provide assistance.
- A cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that the nappy changing area is clean and hygienic at all times.
- To ensure that nappy changing time is a pleasant experience for the child, staff members use this opportunity to interact with the child and provide one to one attention.

TOILETING POLICY

It is the policy of our service and in the interest of the children's health and safety, that a high standard of hygiene is promoted at all times, when children are learning to use the toilet.

Procedures

- To create an awareness and understanding of good hygiene practice, staff members do a project with the children about the importance of self-care for example: flushing the toilet, washing hands etc.
- Anti-bacterial soap and electric hand dryers are used for washing and drying hands.
- A cleaning schedule is in place to ensure that children's toilets are kept in a clean and hygienic condition at all times
- Toileting patterns are encouraged consistently e.g. after mealtimes, before and immediately after naps etc.
- The staff will treat accidents sensitively
- Praise and recognition are used when children are being toilet-trained to encourage self-esteem and a sense of achievement
- If required, another staff member is always available to provide assistance

- The child's privacy is always respected.

Accident Prevention and Safety Policy

It is the policy of our childcare service to promote the health, wellbeing and personal safety of all children and adults involved in our service, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety procedures.

Accident Prevention

- A Safety Statement has been prepared and is reviewed on a regular basis
- All new staff and volunteers must be familiar with the Safety Statement
- There are always at least two adults on the premises
- Children are always supervised by adults.
- Care is taken and measures are in place to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected
- When the main entrance is locked the key must remain in the position which is known and accessible to all adults
- Staff must know which children are present at any one time
- Furniture and equipment are laid out to minimise safety risks and checked regularly for any damage
- Only suitable and age appropriate objects are available to children.

Accident Procedures

- The First Aid Box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location which is known to all adults and easy to access [see Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 Appendix C for contents of First Aid Box].
- At least one member of staff who holds an up to date First Aid Certificate Paediatric First Aid and all other Staff have certificates in Occupational First Aid are always on the premises.
- Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency.
- Minor accidents will be treated in the childcare premises and parents/carers will be advised of the injury and the action taken, when the child is collected.
- The service has an arrangement with the local surgery in case of an accident or sudden illness.
- In the case of serious accident, the senior staff member will phone the doctor and the child's parent/guardian.

- If the child must go to hospital before the parent/guardian arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to hospital and stay until the parent/guardian arrives.
- The child's record card must be brought for reference.
- All accidents must be reported to the insurance company.

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

At Happy Feet Childcare Service, we believe that the safety of all children, parents, staff and volunteers is of paramount importance. We make children, parents, staff and volunteers aware of the dangers of fire and how to react if they ever experience a fire at our service. Our service complies with all legislation relevant in the area of safety and fire prevention including:

- The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2016
- The Fire Services Act 1981
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1989
- Building Regulations 1991
- Ensure the health, well-being and personal safety of all users while on the premises
- Have proper accident prevention and emergency procedures agreed and shared with all facility users.
- Ensure all agreed safety procedures are reviewed and followed consistently.

Procedures

- Fire drill practices take place monthly to ensure that all children and staff are familiar with fire procedures, should a fire take place. Days of fire drills are changed so that every child attending the service is involved in the practice. We practice different routes of escape with the children so that they will be familiar with more than one way.
- Smoke alarms are tested during the fire drills and this is recorded.
Staff discuss with the children the reasons for the fire drills before and after each drill.
- Records of the fire drills are kept detailing the day, time, number of children, number of adults, duration of drill and difficulties encountered in evacuating children and staff from the premises. Difficulties during fire drills are dealt with immediately.
- Fire drill instructions indicating exit routes and the fire assembly point outside the building is clearly displayed in each room.
- All staff are trained in Fire Warden Safety and certificates are stored in the staff file.

- Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and fire blankets are available as recommended by the Fire Safety authority and serviced annually. Written records are kept of the annual checks of the firefighting equipment.

Fire Drill

Raise Alarm

- The person discovering the fire will immediately sound the fire alarm.
- The Designated person will collect the register.

Evacuate Building

- Staff and children evaluate the premises safely to the fire assembly point outside the building.
- The Designated Fire Safety Officer checks all areas of the service to make sure that there are no persons left in the building e.g. toilets. No one is permitted to enter the building after all areas have been checked and cleared.
- Designated person checks children and staff present against the register.
- The designated person ensures the roll book, first aid box and parents contact details and the guest sign in book are taken to the fire assembly point.

Call Fire Brigade

- The Fire Safety officer/Designated person calls the fire brigade from a mobile phone.
- The service has all the relevant fire safety equipment recommended in the Dept. of the Environment's *Fire Safety in Pre-Schools* booklet including fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and fire blankets.
- The fire safety equipment is checked annually.
- Fire drill instructions are posted in each room.
- The assembly point is clearly marked.
- A fire drill is carried out with the staff and children every month.

A record is kept of all fire drills carried out.

CURRICULUM POLICY

Happy Feet Childcare service is committed to developing a curriculum that creates a child centred, play based environment which empowers young children to actively pursue and engage in their own learning. Our curriculum focuses on the emerging curriculum which is vital to

supporting children based on their development, supporting and encouraging the child to take the lead ensuring that their life experiences to date are accounted for in an age-appropriate way and based on their overall stages of development.

This process will be facilitated by adults who will provide appropriate, timely, balanced intervention as well as support, continuity and progression to encourage positive attitudes towards learning.

We recognise that the establishment of daily routine is essential for all young children in our care. We endeavour to provide a programme which encourage the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative and language development and of the children who attend the service.

What are the National Frameworks, Aistear and Síolta?

Aistear (2009) is the national curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. It provides information for adults to help them plan for and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, to ensure all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners within loving relationships with others. Aistear looks at the types of learning that are important for children and suggests how this learning might be encouraged and nurtured. Aistear also provides guidelines on supporting children's learning through partnerships with parents, interactions, play and assessment.

Síolta (2006) is a Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland. Síolta is a quality framework for all services working with children 0 – 6 years of age in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector in Ireland. Published by the CECDE in 2006. **Síolta** provides a framework to guide the reflection and enhancement of quality in our service.

Standards of Síolta:

1. Rights of the child
2. Environments
3. Parents and families
4. Consultation
5. Interactions
6. Play
7. Curriculum
8. Planning and evaluation

9. Health and welfare
10. Organisation
11. Professional practice
12. Communication
13. Transitions
14. Identity and belonging
15. Legislation and regulation
16. Community involvement
17. Record keeping

Curriculum of Happy Feet Childcare Service:

- Is based on clearly defined aims and objectives.
- It is flexible and open to new approaches and ideas, on how to promote and meet the growing need of children.
- We recognise that children are learning all the time, and that children learn best when they are actively involved and interested.
- We include a variety of activities, which provides for the physical development of the children.
- We include stimulating sensory experiences (touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell) appropriate to the child's level of development.
- Our curriculum encourages children to think for themselves, helping them to make their own decisions and find their own answers to questions.
- Our service provides an atmosphere that offers the children suitable challenges and stimulates problem-solving.
- Our curriculum encourages feelings of safety, trust and emotional security to the children in our care.
- This curriculum helps children to develop self-esteem by giving them the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning.
- Encourages at all times, sociability, friendship and co-operation with others, through the provision of co-operative play and the opportunity for children to mix with siblings, same-age peers, younger and older children.
- It aims to match all tasks with each child's level of ability and attention span.

- Our range of activities reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- We regularly review our book area, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Staff have regular meetings to plan and review activities to ensure that they reflect the cultures and ethnicity within each area of our facility and to consider the needs of individual children.
- Our curriculum is developed in consultation with the children and activities are developed around emerging interests of the children.

We encourage learning through free play with a range of activities including:

Imaginative Play:

The children learn to play together, to share, to use their imaginations and to expand their vocabulary. This type of play encourages children to express their feelings and engage in imaginary situations such as doctors and nurses and going to the post office. This is a safe secure environment where children feel supported in their play.

Books:

The children learn to listen when a story is being read. Acting out or reading stories and describing incidents from their own experiences helps to develop their language. Story telling is an activity, which fosters the enjoyment of books, and can be a motivating factor in learning to read.

Music Activities:

Studies have shown that music has a powerful effect on the intellectual and creative development of children to:

- Inspire right-brain, creative thinking
- Induce relaxation
- Improve concentration and memory
- Increase verbal emotional and spatial intelligence

The children enjoy singing songs, using percussion instruments and listening to a wide variety of music, from rhymes to classical and pop music. This helps to stimulate their awareness and enjoyment of music and gives them an opportunity to use music as a form of expression.

Creative Play:

Children are introduced to activities such as art and craft, paint and play dough, sand and water play.

Sand and Water Play:

Children have great fun, but they also develop manipulative and pre-math's skills through exploring and experimenting. Many children can express their emotions and feelings when playing with sand and water as well as finding it a very relaxing and soothing activity.

Arts and Crafts:

The children paint, draw, print, use scissors, glue, and use clay. This allows the children to develop their creative and pre-writing skills. All this work gives the child a different medium to express their feelings, thoughts, and emotions.

Play Dough:

This is not just a fun activity for children; it can also help strengthen muscles in their hands and develop hand eye co-ordination. Once again this is an activity where the children's imagination can be encouraged and developed. Play dough also allows the child to manipulate the material, which may relieve such emotions as anger/frustration.

Jig Saw Construction and Manipulative Toys:

In this area children's pre-reading, pre-writing and hand eye co-ordination are developed. The development of reasoning and problem solving is also developed and encourages small motor movement.

Energetic Play:

Organised energetic activities, such as running, jumping, and skipping, will be a part of the Curriculum and encourages large motor movement. As well as aiding physical growth such activities can be a learning area and a great reliever of built-up stress or tension.

Drama:

Through drama the children learn self-expression and it instils an inner confidence within themselves. Children enjoy drama and it gives them the opportunity to experience the freedom to express their feelings and emotions in a free, comfortable, and safe environment.

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Play Environment Policy: Indoor Play

Play Environment Policy

What we consider in setting up our play environment:

- Is the equipment accessible to the children?
- Do children have to ask the adult for equipment?
- Does the room encourage independent thinking and responsibility?
- Do the children feel they have a say in the layout of the room?
- In other words, do their interests/ideas/projects influence the way the room is planned?
- Can the layout of the room be changed to reflect a child's interest or idea? For example, the home corner becomes a garage because the Learning Story tells you that this child wants to know more about cars, how they work etc. A new theme for the room emerges.
- Do I display the children's active learning and play on the wall, i.e. photographs explaining the children's project work, conversations and what they are learning?
- Is the equipment age appropriate? For example, sensory, cause & effect, toys that build anticipation are suitable for the under 2 years.
- Is the equipment interesting and engaging? Does the equipment encourage investigation and exploration?

- Do I have open-ended materials? Open-ended equipment that can be anything - for example different sized blocks, cardboard box, clay, play dough etc.

Does my equipment support the different developmental areas?

- Music & Movement: real, pretend, handmade musical instruments, ocean drums, puppets, balls, scarves, pom poms, bean bags, ribbon sticks.
- Art: open-ended materials, drawing, painting, clay work etc.
- Storytelling: A storytelling session (circle-time treasure box).
- Role-play: Planning for role-play – dress up, old hats, mirror, puppets, dolls, tea set – real items – like an old telephone, clip boards etc.
- Natural and sensory environment: Nature (natural materials) Heuristic play & Cooking, Malleable Play (Play dough, Sand, Water, Gloop- etc.).
- Constructive Play: Different sized blocks & bricks Lego etc.
- Small World Play: small world items, cars, people, blocks etc.
- Physical play: Gross motor – multi-level areas, space to crawl, walk, run.
- Manipulative Play: Jigsaws, peg boards, picking up and putting in items.
- Structured Play: matching sorting, problem-solving using open-ended materials.

Approach & Language

- How do I react when dealing with a specific behaviour?
- What language do I use when a specific behaviour occurs?
- Do I know what the child is interested in?
- Do I know about the child's dislikes, fears or anxieties? (Parents insights)

For example: Using positive reinforcement - "We will tidy up first and THEN we can go play with the water"

- Do I set achievable and realistic expectations for the child?
- Do I recognise when a child is feeling frustrated? Can I simplify the task? How do I support a child to achieve a goal and feel a sense of achievement?
- Could I give the child some responsibility – a job that the child would be interested in and would make him/her feel important? Refer to your learning story for information about the child's interests.

- Do I recognise the child's achievements? How do I share this information with the parents?
- Do I give the child reasonable choices? (Learning Stories).

Reflective Practice

When we reflect on our practice we demonstrate true professionalism.

- How do I feel about the child and the child's behaviour?
- Would a key worker system help? How will this work?
- Is the Positive Support Plan based on my observations?
- Is there anything I could do that could make a difference? Would adaptations to the environment, routine or equipment engage the child?
- Is my approach child directed, adult directed or bit of both?

The Environment & Equipment: Indoor Play

- Is the equipment accessible to the children?
- Do children have to ask the adult for everything? Does my room encourage independent thinking and responsibility? Do the children feel they have a say in the layout of the room? In other words, do their interests/ideas/projects influence the way the room is planned?
- Can the layout of the room be changed to reflect a child's interest or idea? For example, the home corner becomes a garage because the Learning Story tells you that this child wants to know more about cars, how they work etc. A new theme for the room emerges.
- Do I display the children's active learning and play on the wall, i.e. photographs explaining the children's project work, conversations and what they are learning?
- Is the equipment age appropriate? For example, sensory, cause & effect, toys that build anticipation are suitable for the under 2 years.
- Is the equipment interesting and engaging? Does the equipment encourage investigation and exploration?
- Do I have open-ended materials? Open-ended equipment that can be anything - for example different sized blocks, cardboard box, clay, play dough etc.

Does my equipment support the different developmental areas?

- Music & Movement: real, pretend, handmade musical instruments, ocean drums, puppets, balls, scarves, pom poms, bean bags, ribbon sticks,
- Art: open-ended materials, drawing, painting, clay work
- Storytelling: A storytelling session (circle-time treasure box).
- Role-play: Planning for role-play – dress up, old hats, mirror, puppets, dolls, tea set – real items – like an old telephone, clip boards etc.
- Natural and sensory environment: Nature (natural materials) Heuristic play & Cooking, Malleable Play (Play dough, Sand, Water, Gloop- etc.).
- Constructive Play: Different sized blocks & bricks, lego etc.
- Small World Play: small world items, cars, people, blocks etc.
- Physical play: Gross motor – bikes, multi-level areas, space to crawl, walk, run and preparing for walk (side stepping and cruising)
- Manipulative Play: Jigsaws, peg boards, picking up and putting in items.
- Structured Play: matching sorting, problem-solving using open-ended materials.

Outdoor Play Policy

Happy Feet Childcare Service recognises the importance of outdoor play and experience for all children. The outdoors provides many endless opportunities to explore nature and the natural living objects as well as giving the children ample time to physical exercise in a safe and secure environment.

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Procedure:

1. This service will develop an overall aim/philosophy on outdoor play – We will look at why it's important in your service and why you believe in it. You may also consider as part of your ethos the benefits of outdoor play.

2. We will look at the organisation of the outdoor environment (including addressing the areas of learning) – this policy considers how the outdoor environment will be organised and the range of resources available for the children’s learning and development.

3. Planning- our policy can show how learning and development is supported in the outdoor environment. You may want to include details of areas of learning.

4. Rules for outside – we briefly outline the rules that help children and adults enjoy and stay safe when outside, for example we must always wear suitable clothing outside – waterproofs or hats and sunscreen.

5. Roles and responsibilities of adults –We include brief details of how the practitioner will support and extend children’s play and learning outdoors. You may want to also include a brief list of duties outdoors, such as Health and Safety checks, updating diaries and observations, care of resources and equipment.

6. Equality and inclusion-This service aims to ensure all children, whatever their ability, have opportunities to play and explore outside. This should include:

- Children of all abilities being able to access play outside;
- Boys and girls having equal opportunities to play outside;
- How children will be monitored when using the outdoor area
- being mindful and respectful of others when outside, for example, tidying after the morning session to make sure that the afternoon session is equally well presented as a fresh area to explore.

7. Weather – you may want to include guidelines on how you will respond to different weather conditions, i.e. guidance on clothing and protection in strong sun, wet weather and cold conditions.

8. Outings-this section can include the types of offsite learning opportunities provided, for example how you may use the local park and going further afield for specific outings.

You may also want to refer to your charging policy and include details of ratios, first aid, transport, risk assessment and insurance as well as other details pertinent to your setting.

9. Health and safety – this section could include details of risk assessment, accident procedures, ‘checking the grounds’ procedure, rules for safety and supporting behaviour (In a positive context)

EQUIPMENT POLICY

It is the policy of our service, that the equipment available is suitable, safe, accessible and age appropriate, while providing new challenges and experiences for the developmental needs of each child.

Procedures

- All equipment is purchased from a reputable supplier and is age appropriate and meets all safety regulations
- All equipment is kept clean and hygienic at all times. A cleaning rota is in place to record this.
- Staff members are responsible for the equipment in their rooms, by ensuring that all equipment is clean, safe and well maintained at all times
- Equipment is checked regularly for broken parts /missing pieces and these are disposed of as necessary.
- Open ended materials are provided to allow children to express themselves creatively and freely.
- A balance of play materials will be provided to enhance the quality of children’s play and learning.
- All equipment purchased is based on the children's developmental needs.
- All staff must have a thorough understanding of the developmental benefits children gain from the equipment.
- All equipment must be age appropriate and suitable to the different stages of a child's development.

- The layout of each room must ensure that the equipment is always accessible to the children, to promote choice and a sense of independence. The room layout should be in consultation with the children.
- Staff meet regularly to review the environment, the layout of the room and equipment provided.
- All outdoor equipment is checked prior to the children entering the outdoor area.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare to respect the individuality of all children and adults involved in our service and to promote positive attitudes to children/adults with, developmental delays, special needs and/or disability, differences of culture, ethnicity, gender, language and financial circumstances and to minority groups and members of the Traveller community.

Equal Opportunities Procedures

- Recruitment and employment of staff will comply with all relevant equality legislation and with our Recruitment Policies and Procedures.
- The service is open to all families in the community (see Admissions Policy)
- A range of activities is chosen to reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- We regularly review our book area, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect disability and cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Special dietary needs of children and adults are catered for where possible.
- Statements or behaviour by anyone in the service which are racist or sexist or which reinforce stereotypes; or which are in any other way derogatory to an individual will be challenged.
- We believe that parents, children and staff can work together to create an environment where diversity can be valued and shared; and in which every individual can both contribute and learn.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Management and Staff of Happy Feet Childcare Service believe that children should be encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in a nurturing and suitably planned

environment, where they know what is expected of them, and where clear limits are set, appropriate to their age and stage of development and any special needs they may have. In line with Regulation 19 Health, Welfare of the developing child states the following

No Corporal punishment is permissible at any time in our service

Procedures

- Support positive behaviour of the child attending the service
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will always be acknowledged as it promotes the growth of self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Our service implements an emergent inquiry-based curriculum where children's interests, ideas are represented, and the child's voice is heard.
- The environment will reflect children's interests, enable children to make choices and provide enough space to facilitate respectful, playful and enjoyable interactions which include areas for children to relax and reflect.
- All children's individual strengths, needs and rights are respected in our service.
- The service will strive to manage behaviour consistently in order that children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up good patterns of self-discipline
- Our staff will be a positive role model for all children in their care. This will include calm tone of voice, providing choice, getting down to the child's level, explain feelings and ask open ended questions.
- Our staff will offer feedback, verbal and non-verbal (e.g. a smile or a thumbs up), on what children are doing, name and affirm their efforts, celebrate progress and achievements and help them learn from mistakes, setbacks and challenges.
- Adults working in the service must be good role models by following codes of behaviour and showing respect for each other and the children
- Rules that apply to children and adults in the group will be discussed and agreed. These rules will be made known to all adults, staff, parents and children. Rules will be kept to a minimum
- Ongoing discussion, training and practice will be availed of to train staff in the skills of behaviour management.

Anticipating behaviour

- Staff will work together with parents to get to know the child which may inform responses to different types of behaviour.
- Staff and children will work towards a shared understanding of rules for working together successfully in the learning environment both indoors and outdoors.
- Staff will be observant and recognise different styles of learning and children's varied ways of representing their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and opinions.
- Support will be offered as appropriate. We will establish and maintain good relationships with the child and family. The child will always be reassured that he/she is respected and cared for by our staff members.

Managing moderate behaviour

All behaviour has meaning and is closely connected to how we feel and how we think. Staff will consider what is it that the behaviour is trying to communicate.

- Staff will speak to the child at the child's level, use simple language and speak calmly and quietly to the children when dealing with these situations.
- Staff will model a problem-solving approach with the children and support children in coping when things go wrong and when they are upset.
- Staff will demonstrate respect and empathy by listening and being interested in what the child has to say. It is important that the children feel that the situation has been resolved and that nobody is left with a sense of shame.
- Our staff will mediate when necessary, in a fair way to support children when they are feeling hurt.
- By offering alternative solutions to the problem, positive behaviour is encouraged and helps everybody learn about the value of compromise.

Managing challenging behaviour

- Relationships, environment, planning and resources will be reflected on in order to ensure that the child feels engaged and involved and to enable the child's needs to be met.

- Any recurring difficulties will be dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child's parents, and other adults as appropriate in discussion and reflection.
- A plan of action will be agreed between staff, parents and the child.
- This action plan will be documented, reviewed and changes made where necessary.
- Comfort and support will always be offered to any child who feels hurt; feelings or otherwise.

Positive Strategies for Behaviour Management

- Positive re-enforcement, encouragement and choice will be used to support positive behaviour and promote the child's self-esteem and 1-1 support will be offered where appropriate.
- Comfort and support will be offered where another child has been hurt in an incident.
- Explanations for challenging unacceptable behaviours and attitudes will be made clear immediately to the child/children.
- It will always be made clear to the child in question that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable and not the child.
- Staff will use simple language, speaking calmly and quietly to the children when dealing with these situations.
- Staff will demonstrate respect and empathy by listening and being interested.
- By offering alternatives, positive behaviour is encouraged and helps to teach children about the value of compromise.
- Recurring problems will be dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child's parents, and other appropriate adults
- Books and activities will be available to help the children explore and name their feelings, where appropriate, in conjunction with an adult.

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Policy

This Policy will be developed in line with the National Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (DCYA 2016)

Mission statement

Happy Feet Childcare aims to provide a high-quality care service in a home from home environment where children can learn through the medium of play, build their self-confidence and esteem, become independent and prepare for their future years.

Policy Statement

This policy represents the agreed principles and commitments for inclusion, in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter.

Happy Feet Childcare will implement this policy to support and develop an inclusive environment for children and adults within our early childhood service.

‘Inclusion’ refers to:

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

Role of Inclusion Coordinator

The Inclusion Coordinator within our service is Laura Sweeny.

Core principles

Happy Feet Childcare Service actively supports learning and participation that does not hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all children and all opportunities are accessible for all children and adults using this service. This is achieved by using a child-centred equality and diversity approach to create an inclusive learning environment accessible to all.

The Core principles of our Inclusion strategy are:

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

Early childhood practitioners work to ensure that:

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

Responsibilities of Management and Educators include:

All families and children are encouraged to participate, accessing learning experiences through the curriculum on offer.

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

Admissions Policy

Please see Happy Feet Childcare Admissions policy, which contains all policies & procedures for the admission to/enrolment in the service.

Working in partnership with parents

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

[An effective diversity and equality approach will ensure that ability and diversity are recognised and celebrated, and that discrimination, inequality and exclusion are addressed.](#)

Dealing with discriminatory incidents

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children need to know that name calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident. Refer back to the rules of the service where appropriate.
- Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some Issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made outside the setting. Recognise when it is an adult issue,

and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.

- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape and how we respond to a given situation. Be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service.

Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented

If you as staff or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow the Happy Feet Childcare Complaints policy and procedure to make a complaint.

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

The above policy will be re-evaluated through regular intervals throughout the year. We at Happy Feet service value your input.

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

(Name): **Laura Sweeny**

[@Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education \(DCYA 2016\)](#)

Access and Inclusion Model

The Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. Its goal is to empower service providers to deliver an inclusive Pre-School experience, ensuring that every eligible child can fully participate in the ECCE programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

It is the policy of Happy Feet Childcare Service to promote the active participation of parents in the planning and development of the service, valuing parents as the first educators of their children.

Procedures to encourage parental involvement:

- Regular meetings are held with parents
- Parents can be provided with a handbook giving details of the service before the child commences.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in decisions about policies and procedures operated by the service, and any other aspect of the service that affects their child.
- Parents are welcome to visit the service at any time in line with our open-door policy.
- Staff members are available to discuss any concerns a parent may have regarding their child and the service.
- Parents will be asked to attend the Annual General Meeting and will be invited to join the service management committee.

Methods of keeping parents informed:

- Inspection Reports
- Policies and Procedures
- Curriculum Plan
- Notice boards
- Letters
- Telephone calls
- Email
- Weekly Text
- Face to face chats
- Facebook Page

SETTLING IN POLICY

It is the policy of this service that every effort is made to ensure that the settling in period is as easy and pleasant as possible for the children and their parents/carers. It is important the child feels valued and respected as they settle into their new

surroundings. We work closely with families to help ensure the transition from home to our service is smooth and has as little disruption for the child and family as possible.

Settling in procedures

1. When an initial enquiry is made with our service, the aim is for the parent(s) and the service to get a sense of the child and to understand his or her needs, interests and strengths.
2. The service recognises that the parent(s) of the child will know the best approach to use with their child during settling in.
3. On enrolment, parent(s) are encouraged to share as much information as possible about their child. The enrolment forms will ask about the family members, their favourite games and play, any pets and anything unique to their child. This will help with getting to know the child and preparing for their arrival.
4. Once enrolment is complete, the parent(s) and the manager will arrange a meet and greet day. This will include time to go through the operational side of the service, talk about the best approach to settling the child into the service (examples follow), meet the staff and key worker of the child and spend some time in the room getting to know the routine, curriculum and the other aspects of the early childhood education service.
5. When supporting a child to settle into a new service, key to success is flexibility by service and the parent(s). The service will aim to be as flexible as possible and parent(s) are asked to consider their own availability in supporting the settling in process.

6. No child will be pressurised to take part in any activity during the settling in period.
7. To help staff build a relationship with the child, staff will discuss the child's interests with parents, as well as their likes, dislikes and key words the child uses at home.
8. Each parent will be given a daily account of the child's progress during the settling in period.

The aim of the parent(s) when settling in their child is to:

- Work closely with staff in the service to support the child.
- Help your child make the transition as smoothly as possible
- Talk with your child about going to the service and let them know what to expect.
- Listen closely to your child and address any concerns or worries they may have
- Organise to have time available and to be flexible during the first weeks of settling in.

Most importantly both the service and parent(s) should have a clear plan outlining the agreed steps of settling in. This policy was agreed and adopted by Happy Feet Childcare.

Data Protection Policy

Purpose of this Policy

This Policy is an acknowledgment that **Happy Feet Childcare** has a commitment to protect the rights and privacy of the individuals (including children, staff, parents and others) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003.

Designated Data Controller

Under the provisions of the Act's **Happy Feet Childcare** has appointed a "Data Controller" to manage the storage of personal information about staff, children and families in its computerised and manual records.

Happy Feet Childcare Data Controller is Anita Flynn/Laura Sweeny.

The Eight Rules of Data Protection

Happy Feet Childcare endeavours to meet the eight rules of data protection as per the Data Protection Commissioner 'A Guide for Data Controllers' (2008), and the OMCYA's Data Protection Guidelines for Childcare Service Providers (2010)

- Obtain and Process information fairly.
- Ensure that the data subjects know what information is being held about them and for what purpose.
- Keep information for lawful purposes.

- Process information in ways compatible with the purpose for which it was originally intended.
- Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date and ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Retain the information no longer than is necessary for the purpose.
- Give a copy of personal information to the individual on request.
- Only personal data necessary for the purpose should be collected and staff should be able to access this information if needed to carry out functions.
- Have adequate access control including computer and manual files; ensure information is kept safely in files and manager must grant access to files.

Procedures and Practice

1. Obtain and process information fairly

In order for Happy Feet Childcare to fairly obtain data from an individual, the designated data controller must identify themselves at the time the data is being collected, and the purpose in collecting the data, and the persons or categories of persons to whom the data may be disclosed.

To fairly process the data it must have been fairly obtained and the person giving the data must have consented to the processing of such (e.g.) PPS numbers.

All individuals from whom data is being sought must be made aware whether replies to questions asked are obligatory and the consequences of not providing replies to those questions. Also, they must be made aware of the existence of the right of access to their personal data, and the right to rectify their data if inaccurate or processed unfairly.

2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes.

Under data protection legislation, Happy Feet Childcare will only keep data for specific, lawful and clearly stated purposes and the data will only be processed in a manner compatible with the purpose(s). Happy Feet Childcare acknowledges the individual's right to question the purpose for which we request or hold his/her data.

In this case, only information required on the Parent Declaration Form will be requested from parents for the purposes of the schemes. Happy Feet Childcare will use the information provided on the Parent Declaration Form to complete the electronic returns and return them to the OMCYA.

Happy Feet Playschool will not keep a record or copy of Parental Declaration Forms.

3. Keep it safe and secure

Happy Feet Childcare acknowledges that the security of personal information is a very important consideration under the Data Protection Acts. Appropriate security measures will be taken by Happy Feet Childcare against unauthorised access to the data it is collecting and storing on behalf of the OMCYA, staff, and others.

A minimum standard of security will include the following measures:

- Access to the information will be restricted to authorised staff on a “need-to-know” basis.
- Manual files will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet located away from public areas
- Any information which needs to be disposed of, will be done so carefully and thoroughly
- Premises will be secured when unoccupied
- access to computer systems should be password protected with other factors of authentication as appropriate to the sensitivity of the information;
- information on computer screens and manual files to be kept hidden from callers to Happy Feet Childcare
- Happy Feet Childcare will take all reasonable measures to be taken to ensure that staff are made aware of the organisation’s security measures, and comply with them a designated person should be responsible for security and for periodic reviews of the measures and practices in place.

4. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date

5. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive

Only relevant information required will be sought from staff, parents, and others to achieve the purpose for which the information is required.

Additional information will only be requested if required for a specific purpose. This may include information required as set out in Happy Feet Childcare’s policies and procedures and Staff Handbook.

Happy Feet Childcare **will** ensure that appropriate procedures are in place, including periodic review and audit, to ensure that each data item is kept up-to-date.

6. Retain the information for no longer than is necessary for the purpose

Happy Feet Childcare **has** a responsibility to be clear about the length of time for which data will be kept and the reason why the information is being retained. It is a key requirement of Data Protection legislation as personal data collected for one purpose cannot be retained once that initial purpose has ceased. Equally, as long as personal data is retained the full obligations of the Acts attach to it.

7. Give a copy of his/her personal data to that individual, on request

Every individual about whom a data controller keeps personal information has a right to request a copy of the data which is kept about them. Happy Feet Childcare will only hold limited personal information on an individual. A copy of this information will be included along with other personal information held about the individual making the access request.

An individual who wishes to make an access request must:

- apply to the data controller of Happy Feet Childcare: in writing (which can include email);
- give any details which might be needed to help identify him/her and locate all the information kept about him/her e.g. previous addresses
- pay the childcare service an access fee of €5. Please note: the access fee cannot exceed €6.35.

On making an access request any individual about whom Happy Feet Childcare keeps personal data is entitled to:

- a copy of the data you are keeping about him or her
- know the categories of their data and your purpose/s for processing it
- know the identity of those to whom you disclose the data
- know the source of the data, unless it is contrary to public interest
- know the logic involved in automated decisions
- Data held in the form of opinions, except where such opinions were given in confidence and even in such cases where the person's fundamental rights suggest that they should access the data in question it should be given.

To make an access request to Happy Feet Childcare for personal data, the person must:

- apply to in writing (which can include email);

- give any details which might be needed to help you identify him/her and locate all the information you may keep about him/her e.g. previous addresses, date of birth, etc.

Every individual about whom a data controller keeps personal information has a number of other rights under the Act, in addition to the Right of Access. These include the right to have any inaccurate information rectified or erased, to have personal data taken off a direct marketing or direct mailing list and the right to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner.

In response to an access request you must:

- supply the information to the individual promptly and within 40 days of receiving the request;
- provide the information in a form which will be clear to the ordinary person

Informing Staff on Data Protection Acts

Happy Feet Childcare will ensure that:

- The basic principles of data protection are explained to staff and clients.
- There are regular updates to guidance material and staff training and awareness, so that data protection is a “living” process aligned to the way the Childcare Services conducts its business.
- Document procedures, for example with regard to accuracy and have regular security reviews.
- Allocate responsibility for compliance and set-out what in-house sanctions may be imposed if correct procedures are not followed.
- Set out the circumstances in which personal data may be disclosed to third parties, including Gardaí and other enforcement agencies.
- Make staff aware that from October 2007 the principles of data protection apply to both computer and manual records, including those created before July 2003.

Happy Feet Childcare will provide for:

- Periodic audit checks and reviews.
- A procedure for complaints handling.
- Plans for remedial steps if things go wrong.

- Privacy/Data Protection Statements on Forms and Websites and an internal e-mail and Internet use policy.

Data collected through Garda Vetting

Happy Feet Childcare will process their Garda Vetting requests through IPPA for employees. This childcare service understands that sensitive information may be identified through Garda Vetting. In the event that an employee's Garda vetting raises concerns the information will be dealt with on a confidential basis. In relation to Garda vetting, Happy Feet Childcare's appointed data controller will share the information with the Child Protection Designated Person / Manager if different to the Data Controller. Happy Feet Childcare will not pass on a copy of an employee's Garda Vetting Form to any other party.

Review Date:

Date: 2nd July 2026

Person Responsible: Anita Flynn