



Childcare Policies and Procedures

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WELCOME TO ARDTONA HOUSE SCHOOL

Ardtona House School is a private Montessori Pre-School and Junior School up to second class. It was established in 1942 and has been catering for the academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of children from 3-8 years since then. Ardtona is a catholic school but we welcome children of all denominations to attend. The school has a warm and friendly atmosphere providing children with a homely and caring environment in which to learn and develop. Our extensive garden provides a safe and stimulating playing facility all year round in which the children are given the opportunity to develop physically and learn new skills.

In our work as educators we value the importance and individuality of each child and strive to support every child's development to its full potential. We also seek to cultivate in each child a sense of responsibility, respect for others and for the environment as well as independence, initiative and self-confidence.

We recognize the primary role of parents in the care and education of their children. We adopt a partnership approach with parents and invite and welcome their input and involvement at all levels. In addition to class meetings and formal parent-teacher meetings, parents are welcome to visit the school at any time to discuss their child's progress. We are notified to and inspected by Tusla- The Child and Family Agency.

Mrs Margot O'Connor
School Principal

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OBJECTIVES

- At Ardtona House School our ethos and practice values diversity and promotes equality.
- We aim to select friendly, dependable, mature and professional teachers through our rigorous recruitment and selection policy.
- To ensure that the developmental, educational, emotional and social needs of each child are met daily.
- The voice of the child is heard, respected and contributes to our programme.
- We aim to deliver a quality Montessori pre-school programme which addresses children's well-being, identity and belonging, communication and exploring and thinking, along the principles of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. For older children we follow the National Primary School Curriculum.
- We aim to make Ardtona House School accessible to all members of the community, regardless of race, gender, family status, age, disability, or religious belief.
- We aim to work with 'Síolta' The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, by following its 12 principles of quality and the 16 standards within its framework.
- We operate within the Childcare (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and The National Standards for Pre-Schools.
- The environment is planned and well-organised in a way that suits the different needs of individual children, while keeping in mind the importance of Safety and Hygiene
- Parents are actively welcomed at Ardtona House School at all times. We endeavour to share information and communicate with parents directly, in order to give feedback at the end of each day and to ensure that they are made aware of on-going developments in policies and procedures.
- Ardtona House School wishes to promote a positive atmosphere where children, teachers and parents are treated with respect.

SERVICES

ADMISSIONS and ENROLMENT

Principles

It is the policy of Ardtona House School to offer equal access to children and their parents/guardians inclusive of special needs, cultural, financial status and religious orientation.

We focus on ensuring that every child feels safe and welcome at all times, while providing the highest standard of care and commitment.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part IV 13 (1) Register of Pre-School Children) (Síolta Standard 10: Organisation, Síolta Standard 12: Communication) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 2: Contract, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 16: Equal Opportunities)

Statement of Intent

The Admissions Policy and Procedure will always be followed. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy and Procedures

- Parents/carers are required to complete the registration form.
- In the event of places being over-subscribed, the Principal reserves the right to select places in order of application.
- Parents/carers will receive a letter from the Principal outlining the 'settling-in' process in September before the children commence at Ardtona House School.
- Parents/carers are welcome in the school setting for as long as is required to settle their child, by prior agreement with the Principal.
- Children with special needs and disabilities are welcome. Parents need to be aware that it may be required for them to provide a special needs assistant when necessary.
- We will provide support and encouragement to parents/carers during the settling-in period should the transition be difficult. Teachers will phone parents/carers to reassure them, if necessary.
- When children are brought to school in the morning it is best to leave them as quickly as possible (even if they are upset). In our experience this helps them to settle-in more easily. Should any child continue to fret we would always contact you.

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- Ensure that children are wearing clothes that allow them to go to the toilet independently, for example, dungarees or trousers that the child cannot open/close themselves are not a good idea.
- All details regarding a child's application form must be completed and any relevant important information or specific diet or health requirements must be noted.
- We reserve the right to refuse admission.
- We reserve the right to terminate our services.
- Parents should familiarise themselves with our policies and procedures; they will be reviewed and changed accordingly to incorporate any new developments from the Tusla.
- No uniform is necessary but we do ask that all children wear suitable, comfortable clothes, ideal for art work and outdoor messy play. (No 'good' clothes please). Velcro shoes are preferable. All long hair must be tied up.

Admission Criteria - Preschool

- Priority will be given to siblings and children of past pupils
- Establishment of a waiting list on a first come first served basis
- Children must be over three years to attend the Montessori Preschool.
- Children must toilet trained before starting in the Montessori Preschool.
- Ardtona House School offers a one year free pre-school place for children eligible for the scheme. Children outside this age range can avail of a place based on parents paying the appropriate fee.
- A deposit of €250 is payable upon the allocation of a place, which is refunded if children do not want to avail of optional extras. Otherwise it is deducted from the first term's fees.

Admission Criteria - School

- Priority given to children in attendance at the preschool.
- Children on the waiting list.
- Upon registration school children pay a non-refundable deposit of €500.

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What should they bring with them?

- It is not necessary for children to bring a favourite toy to school.
- Children will bring a small packed lunch with them, such as a sandwich, piece of fruit, a biscuit and a drink. We prefer if they do not bring crisps, sweets or yogurt drinks. It is a Tusla requirement that the lunches are refrigerated, therefore they should be brought to school in a plastic/zip lock bag, suitable for easy storage in the fridge.
- If your child has any particular dietary requirements or allergies please let the Teacher know.
- Please ensure that children's belongings are clearly named.

Procedures for Children with Allergies

When parents start their children at Ardtona House School they are asked if their child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the registration form.

If a child has an allergy, a risk assessment is completed to detail the following:

- The allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc).
- The nature of the allergic reactions e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
- What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g. Epipen).
- Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen.
- This form is kept in the child's personal file and a copy is displayed where teachers can see it.
- Parents train teachers in how to administer special medication in the event of an allergic reaction.
- If a child is identified to have a nut allergy, other parents are made aware so that no nut or nut products are accidentally brought in, for example to a party.

Life Saving Medication and Invasive Treatments

Adrenaline injections (Epipens) for anaphylactic shock reactions (caused by allergies to nuts, eggs etc) or invasive treatments such as rectal administration of Diazepam (for epilepsy).

The Principal must have:

- A letter from the child's GP/consultant stating the child's condition and what medication if any is to be administered;
- Written consent from the parent or guardian allowing teachers to administer medication; and
- Proof of training in the administration of such medication by the child's GP, a district nurse, children's' nurse specialist or a community paediatric nurse.
- A copy of such proof may be required by our insurance provider for appraisal so that our insurance can be extended if necessary.

All records kept by Ardtona House School are kept secure and confidential

Forms

Registration

Medicines Administration

Parents Agreement

Outing Authorisation

All About Me

CHILDRENS CHARTER

Principles

This code has been developed to inform and guide the decisions and behaviour of all Ardtona House School teachers. (Síolta Standard 1: Rights of the Child) (National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning)

Statement of Intent

Young children rely on responsible adults to care and protect them. Our team at Ardtona House School 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 assist us provide the best quality service possible.

Policy and Procedure

This Code of Ethics is underpinned by the following principles.

- The wellbeing of the individual child is of fundamental importance.
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each child attending the school.
- 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 Ardtona House School has developed the following Children's Charter.

CHILDREN'S CHARTER

Children's welfare and their rights to 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 and carers should not be discriminated against, particularly in relation to colour, age, race, religion, gender, disability medical conditions or background.

Parents should be recognised and respected as children's first and continuing educators.

COLLECTIONS and ARRIVALS

Principle

Ardtona House School is committed to ensuring the safety and care of the children upon arriving and leaving the school.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part IV 13 (e) Register of pre-school children, 14.1(j) Records)([Síolta Standard 10: Organisation](#), [Síolta Standard 12: Communication](#)) ([National Standard 1: Information](#), [National Standard 2: Contract](#), [National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians](#), [National Standard 20: Safety](#))

Statement of Intent

All Parents/employees must follow the collections and arrivals policy and procedure.

Attendance

It is essential to the efficient running of the school that you inform the Teacher if your child is unable to attend the school and follow up with a telephone call to inform the school when the child will be returning. A register of the times and days that children attend is kept.

Arrivals

- Register your child on arrival with your child's class Teacher.
- Support your child to remove coats and to find their coat pegs.
- Please ensure that all external doors are securely closed for the safety of all the children when you leave.
- If a child will not be attending we request that parents advise us.

Collection Policy

The Collection Policy of Ardtona House School will be achieved by:

- Parents/guardians must collect their child by the agreed collection time. Parents 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 Teacher will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent the Teacher will contact the other named persons to collect the child.
- 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 Teacher will contact an authorised collector. If no one is

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available to collect the child then the Principal should contact the Tusla social work child protection team.

- At Ardtona House School we ask that parents do not collect their child from the school while under the influence of alcohol. This can lead to embarrassment and worry within the team. If parents feel that this situation may arise they should arrange for an authorised collector to collect their child.
- 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 letter of explanation must be presented signed and dated by the parent / guardian with a contact telephone number, the Teacher will then telephone the parent prior to allowing the child leave the school. If the parent personally arranges this with the Teacher the telephone call may not be necessary, but signed consent will be required at all times.
- Please ensure that you park safely and do not cause an obstruction, even for a very short time.
- In the event of a parent collecting another fellow child a prior arrangement must be made.
- In order to comply with childcare legislation which determines the Teacher/ child ratios and in the best interest of the children (children can become distressed when no-one comes for them when all the others have been collected) it is important that children are collected on time from the school.

Late Collection of Children

At Ardtona House School we quite 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 in order to cause as little distress as possible. Parents in this situation must contact the Principal to say that they will be late and arrange with teachers what to do. Children are only released from Ardtona House School to individuals named by the parent.

Early Collection of Children

We ask that parents let us know if you will be picking up your child early so that we can have the child ready for you and to minimise disrupting the rest of the class.

Late Drop Off

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

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.
- 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 you to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant teachers. If there is any legal documents i.e. custody order, barring order we would ask you 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 premises.
- If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the school this will be viewed as trespassing. The school will in this event contact the Local Gardai.

By law, an unmarried mother is the sole guardian of a child born outside of marriage. Unless the mother agrees to sign a statutory declaration, an unmarried father must apply to the court in order to become a legal guardian of his child

Forms

Registration Form

FEES POLICY

Principle

The management of parental fees in Ardtona House School endeavours to reflect best practice with regard to the forecasting of the budget costs for the provision of a quality pre-school and to ensure the long term sustainability of school. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 14.(1) (g)(h) Records)([Síolta Standard 10: Organisation](#)) ([National Standard 1: Information](#), [National Standard 2: Contract](#))

Statement of Intent

This policy applies to all parents/guardians who use Ardtona House School for their children.

Policy and Procedures

The following practices set out the fee policy for Ardtona House School

General Fee Payment Information

Parents/Guardians are required to sign a Parent Agreement in relation to payment of fees.

We operate the following schemes

Free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE Scheme) under the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Eligible children enrolled in part-time childcare services will receive free pre-school provision of 3 hours per day, 5 days a week over a 38 week period (term time).

- Fees must be paid one month or termly in advance.
- Fees must be paid by cash /cheque Standing order.
- Fees must be paid to the Principal only.
- A receipt will be issued upon request.

Deposits

Preschool- A deposit of €250 is payable upon the allocation of a place in the Pre-school, which is refunded if children do not want to avail of optional extras. Otherwise it is deducted from the first term's fees.

School-Upon registration school children pay a non-refundable deposit of €500.

Reviewing Fees

- Fees are reviewed in annually by the management team.

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- Parents/Guardians/Carers will be informed by giving two months notice of the increase in fees.
- Increase in fees each year will be related to the cost of living increases and/or exceptional cost circumstances.

Late Collection of Child/Children from the Pre-school

Parents/Guardians should note that due to legislative requirements under the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006 and *Children First* – Child Protection Guidelines. Two teachers 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. Ardtona House School requests that all children should be collected by the designated time in order that the school may follow health and safety practices to ensure that the school may close safely.
- Please see the Collections and Arrivals Policy and Procedure

Withdrawal of Children from the School

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

- Give notice, in writing that the child/children are leaving Ardtona House School
- Give Ardtona House School one month's notice or pay Ardtona House School one month's fees.
- Ardtona House School also reserves the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from Ardtona House School if they are not 'settling in' or adapting to Ardtona House School. Ardtona House School agrees to give two week's notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.

Non Payment of Fees

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

Forms

Parent Agreement

RANGE OF CHILDCARE SERVICES

Principles

Ardtona House School provides a Montessori and Educational programme for children from 3 to 8 years. The school may cater for up to 85 children ([Child Care \(Pre-school Services\) \(no 2\) Regulations 2006](#) and [Child Care \(Pre-school Services\) \(No 2\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2006 Part I, 2 \(i-vi\) Categorisation of Pre-School Services, Part IV 14. 1\(c\),\(d\),\(f\),\(g\),\(h Records\)](#))([Síolta Standard 10: Organisation](#)) ([National Standard 1: Information](#))

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will cater for children:

- 3 to 5 years - Sessional and Part-Time Pre-School
- 4 to 8 years - Private Junior School.

Policy and Procedure

The type of service we currently provide is defined in the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006 as Sessional Care

Other relevant policies that we will adhere to are the:

- Admissions Policy and Procedure
- The Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure

Our School:

- We are open from 8:00am to 2:00pm and the Afterschool 2.00pm to 5.30 Monday to Friday
- Ardtona House School is open 38 weeks per year in line with school terms.
- We are offering FREE one year pre-school session for children qualifying for the ECCE scheme

Our Facilities include:

Large fully fenced, well-equipped outdoor Playground
Bright, spacious classrooms
Trained and experienced

The class are designed in such a way as to meet the developing needs of each individual child. The children are guided through a range of educational and play activities at their own pace. We create a positive and secure environment where children feel confident in exploring their surroundings.

Montessori Pre-school

The aim of Montessori Education is to prepare the child for life. The Teacher introduces to each child the skills and qualities necessary to live life to the full in an independent, safe and happy way. It also develops the child to their full potential. In the Montessori classroom, the children explore the world through their senses and their own activity. They develop a love of learning and enjoy working, which hopefully will stay with them throughout life. Montessori is an education for life, a learning process environment. Montessori is about learning to balance responsibility with freedom of choice. It offers children the opportunity to realize their potential, in a non-competitive environment and seeks to promote in them:

- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- A sense of responsibility and self-worth
- A sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Independence and adaptability
- Co-operation with others
- A sense of community respect for the rights and needs of others
- Concentration and persistence in completing a task
- Initiative and self-motivation

Junior School

Our Junior School follows the principles of the Primary School Curriculum as laid out by the Department of Education and Science in Ireland. This curriculum is greatly enhanced by incorporating the Montessori principles, which foster a love of independent learning.

We take great pride in the high academic achievement of the children in our school. Emphasis is placed on individual learning and progress. We value the importance of each child's individual learning needs and strive to support their development to its full potential.

After School

Ardtona House School run an After School Programme during the school term for children attending our Junior School. In the course of the afternoon, the children are provided a snack and a hot dinner. Homework is supervised and the children have time to enjoy a variety of activities and plenty of free play.

Extra Curricular Activities

Playball

Playball introduces sports skills, but also valuable life skills such as goal setting, independence, concentration, mid line crossing, team work, sportsmanship, discipline and more. It also gives children an insight to:-

Flexibility, Fitness and Fun

Stretch and Grow

The Stretch-n-Grow curriculum and glossary of exercises are safe, effective and age-appropriate. And most of all children and parents love it! Developed under the supervision of an Advisory Board of paediatricians, nutritionists, educators and fitness professionals, the Stretch-n-Grow curriculum complements our school's physical education modules. In addition, Stretch-n-Grow follows the Department of Education's Physical Education Guidelines. Stretch-n-Grow links in with Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Our Advisory Board and Affiliate Advisory Council regularly review the Stretch-n-Grow programme to ensure that our exercises are safe and are in compliance with the latest youth fitness guidelines.

There are genuine benefits to the Stretch-n-Grow programme – Benefits for the children and parents but also for the participating schools.

Speech and Drama

We have a visiting drama Teacher who takes each class on a weekly basis.

Music Foundation

The children are also introduced to Music Foundation by our visiting music teacher, who also offers private group recorder and violin lessons through the Kodaly method.

SETTLING- IN

Principles

“Settling-in is an interim stage in the transition between home and the outside world. Children’s whole future attitude to new experiences could be affected by how this situation is managed. Due care and attention must be paid to a child’s need for time to settle into any setting”. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Síolta Standard 13: Transitions) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being)

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School we aim to ensure children feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/carers.

Policy and Procedure

Ardtona House School will therefore endeavour to make the settling-in process a positive experience for children and will work closely in partnership with parents/carers to ensure this is achieved

We recognise that in some cases there may be particular difficulties experienced by children, parents/carers, and teachers during the settling-in period and we are prepared to explore and consider various ways of settling children into the school. All children are individuals and we plan to meet their individual needs and resolve any difficulties quickly and smoothly.

In order to accomplish this we will ensure that:

Pre- Admission

- The Principal invites the child and parents/guardians to visit Ardtona House School at an agreed time.
- Ardtona House School offers phased/staggered settling-in if required.
- Prior to enrolment exchange of information will take place between parents and teachers. In order to meet the needs of each child parents/guardians will be asked to fill out the “All About Me” form. Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide teachers with information on their child’s likes/dislikes, interests, achievements etc.

First Day

- The Teacher will greet the child and parent together.

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- The parent will be assured of the value of their presence to the child in this process.
- Parents are requested to stay for the child's first session. Some children may not be ready for a full session and the Teacher will advise the parents on this matter.
- Parents will be made aware of the necessity of interacting with their child and the other people in the school in order to reassure the child of the safety of the new surroundings.
- Children must be collected on time and promptly from their session at the agreed time.

Ongoing Matters

- Parents must never leave Ardtona House School without saying goodbye to their child.
- Teachers will provide support and encouragement to parents/guardians during the settling-in period should the transition be difficult. Teachers will phone parents/guardians to reassure them, if necessary.
- Teachers may need to assist parents/guardians through this separation process as an extended goodbye can be distressful for children.
- The 'settling in' process has no time limits and may need to be repeated if a child becomes unsettled.
- When children are beginning to settle without their parents/guardians, they should be supported in observing, experimenting and discovering for themselves without any attempt to make them participate in activities.
- Opportunities will be made available for parents/guardians and tutors to exchange information on the child's progress at this stage.
- Parents/guardians and their children are encouraged to get to know the key people involved in their child's life.
- Children who are still clearly distressed having followed the above procedure may need to have their attendance deferred for a trial period.

Forms

All About Me
Registration Form

TEACHER RATIOS

Principles

Ardtona House School Management will ensure a sufficient number of suitable and competent adults are working directly with the pre-school children in the pre-school at all times

The teacher/child ratios are governed by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 8 (1)(a) Management and Staffing, Part V, 18 (b) Premises and Facilities) ([Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation](#)) ([National Standard 5: Organisation and Management](#), [National Standard 17: Premises](#))

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will follow the adult/child ratios as defined in the above Regulations.

For afterschool children we will follow good practice.

The minimum number of pre-school leaders/teachers and assistants in a service providing the ECCE free Pre-School Year will be as follows:

Up to 11 children: 1 pre-school leader

12-22 children: 1 pre-school leader and 1 pre-school assistant

23-33 children: 2 pre-school leaders and 1 pre-school assistant

34-44 children: 2 pre-school leaders and 2 pre-school assistants

For each group of up to 22 children in an ECCE setting there must be at least 1 pre-school leader who meets the qualification requirements outlined above (i.e. minimum NFQ Level 5 or equivalent).

The teacher ratios outlined above apply to the free pre-school year provision element of the service only. Outside of the pre-school year requirement, services must apply the teachers ratios in respect of full-time, part-time or sessional services as outlined in the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006.

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Policy and Procedure

Ardtona House School will follow the following adult/child ratios:

SERVICE	AGE	ADULT/CHILD RATIO
PRIMARY SCHOOL	4 - 8 YEARS	1:20 with classroom support
SESSIONAL	3 - 5 YEARS	1:10
ECCE PLACES	3.2 – 5.7 YEARS	1:11
PART TIME	3 – 6 YEARS	1:8

PARENTS

CAR PARKING

Principle

To make parents aware of parking arrangements

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part V, 18 (a) Premises and Facilities) (Sioleta Standard: 12 Communication) (National Standard 1: Information)

Statement of Intent

There are a limited number of parking spaces available. We ask parents to be aware that these places available are only to be used for drop off and pick up only.

Policy and Procedure

- Parking spaces are available on a “first come first” served basis.
- At Ardtona House School we cannot accept responsibility for cars parked, or damage done while parking.
- We ask parents to show consideration to our neighbours and observe local speed limits.
- Parents must accompany their child into the school.
- We request that parents do not park in front of neighbouring property or cause obstruction when parking.
- Parents are advised not to leave their car running while dropping off or collecting a child.
- We suggest that parents do quick drop off/and pick up to avoid road and parking congestion.

COMMENTS and COMPLAINTS

Principle

At Ardtona House School our ethos is to provide all enrolled children with the highest quality of care and commitment. (Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families, Síolta Standard 4: Consultation, Síolta Standard 10: Organisation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 7: Complaints, National Standard 11: Child Protection)

Statement of Intent

It is the policy of Ardtona House School to welcome children's and parents views in the development of school. Our children/ teachers /parents have the right to voice their opinions and concerns. It is our policy to welcome all suggestions, or comments in relation to our school any comments or suggestions can be made to any teachers. We will give careful attention and prompt and courteous response to any suggestions, comments or complaints.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, made by a parent, member of public or partner agency/organisation. Complaints may be made by a parent, in writing, by phone, in a face-to-face meeting or by a third party acting on behalf of the parent, member of public and partner agency.

Policy and Procedures

- A comment can be made verbally to any member of the school team.
- If a satisfactory response is not received, the complaints procedure can be availed of.
- If a parent/carer wishes to make a complaint they should contact the Principal or Deputy Principal to discuss or resolve the matter.
- If the parent/carer feels that the matter is unresolved, **within a week**, then the complaint must be put in writing, to the Principal.
- The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, in writing, **within 2 working days**.
- The Principal will assume responsibility for dealing with the formal written complaint.

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- If the complaint is related to the behaviour of a Teacher, the Teacher must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and must be given the full details. The disciplinary procedure may be used, if deemed necessary.
- Management will, depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint, decide upon a time-frame for its resolution. **This time-frame will not exceed 1 month.**
- Confidentiality is of the utmost importance when dealing with complaints and comments. (See Policy on Confidentiality).
- After the agreed time-frame, the resolution to the complaint will be communicated, in writing, to the parent/carer who made the complaint.
- If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome, they may make a further written request to the Principal details are available on the Parent Notice Board.
- If a complaint involves a child protection concern, a separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our child protection policy.
- The Principal will inform all parties involved of the outcome of the complaint made.
- If a resolution is not found within a further 28 days the complainant will be advised on the options to complain elsewhere.

Guidance for teachers when dealing with an angry or upset parent

Listening is the key to dealing with any upset parent. After actively listening and taking notes, it's important to let parents know that you thank them for bringing the situation to your attention and that you will investigate it.

Parents should be told what the procedure is for investigating complaints and that the school takes complaints and parent satisfaction seriously.

When an upset parent approaches they should be invited into the office or a quiet area, away from eyes and ears that don't need to see or hear the exchange. Children should not be in earshot of any angry exchange.

If the parent is willing to explain the problem, try to be as open and understanding as possible. If they refuse to calm down, or if they swear or become aggressive, calmly explain that they should put the complaint in writing and ask them to leave.

Any aggressive behaviour should be recorded in the Accident and incident book.

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Preventing Problems

When a school is one that cultivates respect for differences, fosters and promotes dialogue between home and preschool and creates an overall sense of warmth, kindness, and high expectations for learning and behaviour, problems can be kept to a minimum.

At our school we aim to:

- ✓ Keep parents informed on a regular basis about their child's progress and socio-emotional growth. Inform them of any behavioural concerns.
- ✓ Never use sarcasm with children or parents.
- ✓ Include parents in activities to the greatest extent possible.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Principle

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance at Ardtona House School. It is our policy to keep all personal information about our children, families, and teachers private. Confidential and personal information about our children/parents will only be shared by the Principal in relation to child safety, in line with our child protection policy. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part IV, 13(2)(d-f) Register of Pre-School Children Part IV, 14 (1)(a-m) Records ([Síolta Standard 12: Communication](#)) ([National Standard 2: Contract](#), [National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians](#), [National Standard 4: Records](#), [National Standard 7: Confidentiality](#), [National Standard 11: Child Protection](#))

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School respects the right for all information, records and observations to be treated with respect and with due attention to confidentiality and privacy.

Policy and Procedures

We will ensure that:

- All registration forms and records of children attending the school will be kept by the Principal confidentially.
- Parents may have access to the records of their own children but may not have access to information about any other child.
- Any confidential information given by parents/carers to the school will not be passed on to other adults without permission.
- Any information relating to a child's personal circumstances will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared within except with the child's key worker, on a 'need to-know basis'.
- Where a child is believed to be at risk we will take a decision to share information with the statutory authorities, under child protection guidelines.
- All teachers, volunteers, students, parents/carers will be made aware of this confidentiality policy. The policy implementation will be reviewed regularly at staff meetings.
- All the above points are subject to the overall commitment of the school which is to the safety and well being of the children who attend it.

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- Any breach of confidentiality by any teachers will lead to disciplinary action.
- In the case that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible for the Principal at Ardtona House School to share confidential information with the Tusla. This is in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Record Keeping

At Ardtona House School we keep records under two areas i.e. Child/Family records and Personal and Operation Details. All of these records are stored securely. Teachers will have access to the records where appropriate.

Details of the records kept are as follows:

Child/Family Records

- A Register which includes details of the Children attending the school.
- Details in relation to Parent/Guardians.
- Details in relation to the Children's Health.

Personal and Operational Details

- Details of teachers and other staff.
- Details of the Schools Operations.
- Details of Accidents and Administration of Medicines.
- Details of Fire Procedures.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS and CARERS

Principles

“Parents are the first educators of their children and should be involved at all stages in their education and development”. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, Part IV, 13 (1)(a-i)(2)(d) Records) (Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families, Síolta Standard 10: Organisation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 2: Contract, National Standard 3: Working in partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 7: Complaints, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 11: Child Protection, National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 15: Children with Disabilities, National Standard 16: Equal Opportunities)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers to promote the best interests of children and that parents play a key role in the education of their children. Ardtona House School will work in partnership with and support parents in this role.

Policy and Procedures

Ardtona House School recognises the importance of working with parents. It has an “open door” policy where families are always welcome but where the needs of all of the children in our care are always the first priority. Parents will be made feel welcome and regular exchange of information with parents and teachers will enable a two-way process of support.

Ardtona House School will adopt the following procedures:

- Ensure parents views and needs are incorporated, parents rights respected, in regard to all cultural and religious differences.
- Ensure we adhere to respect confidentiality at all times.
- Welcome comments and feedback. Parents are encouraged to follow our complaints/compliments procedure in relation to any issues they may have regarding the school.
- Ensure parents/carers are given regular information about their child’s progress through informal and formal feedback –verbal and written.
- Ensure that all parents/carers are informed about meetings and any other activities being organised by the school.

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- Ensure all parents/carers are aware of the preschool/school policies and procedures through the handbook.
- Encourage parents/carers to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests through curriculum activities in the school.
- Provide parents/carers with updated information by way of a notice board, newsletters, text messaging, the Ardtona website and Facebook page.
- Facilitate appointments and meetings.
- If parents are separated we may contact both parents to discuss a child's progress.
- We ask that parents let us know if you will be picking up your child early so that we can have the child ready for you and to minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

Where English is not the first language of the parent/guardian/carers:

- Teachers will make every effort to communicate with the parent/guardian/carers using verbal/non-verbal methods.
- Teachers will undertake to learn key phrases in the parent/guardian/carers/child's language.
- Parents/guardian/carers will be invited to become involved in the school and share with teachers and children the culture/history of the country of origin.

Open Door Policy

It is our policy at Ardtona House School to offer a bright, warm, welcoming environment. We understand the importance of consultation and building relationships with our children, parents and teachers.

Procedures

- All parents are welcome to visit Ardtona House School at any time, however parents should be aware that we may not be able to give you our attention at this time as the needs of the children in our care come first.
- Potential parents are welcome to visit, however an appointment must be made in advance.
- We ask parents to ensure that their child/children are collected on time; children can become distressed and worried if they are collected late continuously.

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- We would welcome that parents advise each morning of any significant happenings at home that we should know of e.g. child had a poor night's sleep, as he/she may be tired.

Babysitting- Teachers at Ardtona House School **may not** babysit for children that attend the school.

ADMINISTRATION

DATA PROTECTION

Principle

Ardtona House School will conform to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part IV, 13 Register of Pre-School Children, 14 Records) (Siolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Siolta Standard 12: Communication, Siolta Standard 15; Legislation and Regulation) (National Standard 4: Records)

Statement of Intent

Under the provisions of the Act's Ardtona House School has appointed the Principal as a "Data Controller" to manage the storage of personal information about staff, children and families in its computerised and manual records.

Policy and Procedure

Ardtona House School will follow the following principles in relation to keeping data on:

- 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 given originally.
- Ensure that the information is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Retain the information no longer than is necessary.
- Give a copy of personal information to the individual concerned on request.
- Amend information held on employees if the employee indicates that the information is incorrect.
- Adhere to the 'need to know principle' – only personal data necessary for the purpose should be collected and staff should only be able to access the personal data that they need to carry out their functions.

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- Have adequate access controls, firewalls and virus protection and do not forget manual files.
- Have retention policies for the various categories of data.
- Ensure that data maintained is securely and confidentially stored.

Informing Staff on Data Protection Acts

Ardtona House School management will ensure that:

- The basic principles of data protection are explained to staff and parents. This will be done during staff induction, staff meetings and through our parent handbook.
- There are regular updates to data protection awareness, so that data protection is a “living” process aligned to the way the Ardtona House School conducts its business. See Appendix
- The Data Controller will periodically check data held with regard to accuracy and have complete regular security reviews.
- Non compliance of the data protection and other policies of Ardtona House School may invoke the disciplinary procedure.
- Confidential and personal information about our children/parents will only be shared by the data Controllers and Designated Liaison Person in relation to child safety, in line with this our Child Protection Policy. Any breach of confidentiality by any member of staff will lead to disciplinary action.

Ardtona House School will provide for:

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

Employee Responsibilities

As an employee you are responsible for:

- Checking that any information that you provide in connection with your employment is accurate and up to date
- Notifying Ardtona House School of any changes to information you have provided, for example changes of address

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- Ensuring that you are familiar with and follow the data protection policy.

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

Data Security

Employees are responsible for ensuring that:

- Any personal data that you hold, whether in electronic or paper format, is kept securely.
- Personal information relating to children or their families is not disclosed either verbally or in writing, accidentally or otherwise, to any unauthorized third party

Storage of Data

The security of personal information relating to children and families is a very important consideration under the Data Protection Acts. Appropriate security measures will be taken by Ardtona House School against unauthorised access to this data and to the data it is collecting and storing on behalf of the DCYA.

A minimum standard of security will include the following measures:

- Access to the information should 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.
- Computerised data will be held under password protected files with a limited number of users.
- Any information which needs to be disposed of, will be done so carefully and thoroughly.
- Premises will be secured when unoccupied.

Data collected on behalf of DCYA for ECCE

The personal information which parents will be required to provide on application forms for the above scheme including their Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) are protected by the Data Protection legislation.

The following principles should be observed to ensure that the information supplied by parents meets the required levels of data protection.

Obtain and process information fairly

To fairly obtain the data, the data subject must, at the time the personal data is being collected, be made aware of the identity of the data controller/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 in this case, the data subject must have consented to the processing.

Parents who return completed forms to a service provider for the purpose of the ECCE scheme should be aware of and consent to the transmission of the information to the DCYA.

PPSN Numbers

PPSN information may be transmitted electronically through the PIP online system operated by Pobal. The system can electronically check and validate the PPSN number against the name, DOB and PPSN details

Where a parent's declaration is not verified by the DCYA's checks, a letter will be issued to inform them that the subvention (ECCE funding) applied for does not apply. We will correct our register of the subventions due to parents, and supply the parent with the letter, stating that as a result we will not receive grant aid to reduce the fee charged. We will not retain this letter, or a copy of it, for more than 1 month.

If in the verification of information a parent disputes the outcome, they should contact the DCYA directly.

*The Programmes Implementation Platform (PIP) is a new online system which will streamline the administrative processes across the three national childcare funding programmes (ECCE, TEC and CCS).

Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes and use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes

Under data protection legislation, [Insert name of service] 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).

In this case, only information required on the ECCE official form is to be requested from parents for the purposes of the scheme.

The information on PIP Parental Declaration Forms completed by parents is input onto the PIP system and then the form is destroyed confidentially. A form is then generated on the PIP system with a unique reference number and a copy will be given to the parent and copy kept on site for the purposes of compliance visits to show that the child has been registered in accordance with the parent's childcare requirements. Information is held confidentially and securely.

The information contained in these forms should not be used for further purposes or disclosed to third parties, other than the DCYA/Pobal, by Ardtona House School

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Requests for information from third parties should be referred to the DCYA for reply. The PPSN in particular is also protected under Social Welfare legislation.

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

In order to comply with this requirement, [Insert name of service] will comply with the retention period set out for these schemes by the DCYA/Pobal.

Data collected through Garda Vetting

Ardtona House School process their Garda Vetting requests through Barnardos for employees. Ardtona House School 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. All information pertaining to such a situation must be stored in the same way as other data.

Ardtona House School will not pass on a copy of an employee's Garda Vetting Form to any other party. We will hold original Garda Vetting forms and will not accept copies from any other agency.

Dealing with Access Requests

Ardtona House School will ensure that that they follow the guidelines set down by the Data Protection Office. 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. The service provider should only hold limited personal information on an individual. A copy of this information should be included along with other personal information held about the individual making the access request.

On making an access request any individual about whom you keep 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 the data subject must:

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

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- 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.
- Pay an access fee

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 the data controller 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.

Retention of Records

Personnel Records	In general 6 years. Some employment legislation Acts require that information is held for longer periods.
Child Records	Until child is 21 years
Financial Records	6 years for pay slips. Accounting practices and company law apply to other records
Child Photographs/video recording	As per policy
Completed Parent Declaration (ECCE)	Original form to be destroyed or returned to parent once entered onto the PIP system. PIP system printed form to be retained for inspection for 7 years.

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Name of Data Controller	Margot O'Connor
Name of Person(s) with access to children's files	
Name of person with access to employee/student files	
Location of employee files	
Location of children's files	
Name of person(s) with access to PIP files	

Please note that information may need to be disclosed to authorised third parties. Ardtona House School will always ensure the validity of information requests. This list is an example but not exhaustive

- Gardai
- Early Years Inspection Team
- Pobal Compliance Officers
- Insurance Company
- Health and Safety Authority
- National Employment Rights Authority
- Revenue Commissioners

This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice in data management, security and control and to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments made to the Data Protection Acts 1998-2003.

Appendix A

Roles and Responsibilities

APPENDIX A

Data Protection Roles and Responsibilities

Ardtona House School Responsibilities

To ensure the implementation of this policy Ardtona House School has designated Margot O'Connor as the Data Controller. All enquiries relating to the holding of personal data should be referred to the Data Controller in the first instance

Employees are entitled to know:

- What personal information Ardtona House School holds about an employee and the purpose for which it is used?
- How to gain access to it?
- How it is kept up to date?
- What Ardtona House School is doing to comply with its obligations under the 1998-2003 Acts?

Employee Responsibilities

As an employee you are responsible for:

- Checking that any information that you provide in connection with your employment is accurate and up to date
- Notifying Ardtona House School of any changes to information you have provided, for example changes of address
- Ensuring that you are familiar with and follow the data protection policy.

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

Data Security

Employees are responsible for ensuring that:

- Any personal data that you hold, whether in electronic or paper format, is kept securely.
- Personal information relating to children or their families is not disclosed either verbally or in writing, accidentally or otherwise, to any unauthorized third party

Updates and Information on Data Protection

Ardtona House School will provide regular updates on Data Protection requirements for staff:

- At staff meetings.
- Circulated information
- On the staff notice board

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Parents will be provided with data protection information:

- Upon enrolment
- Through our Parent Handbook
- On the parents notice board

If things go wrong

The Data Controllers should be informed immediately if any data has been incorrectly disclosed.

The Data Controllers will:

- Inform the person or persons involved a breach of confidentiality has occurred and their personal data may have been compromised. A record of this will be kept on the employee's file or child's file as relevant.
- Investigate where the breach of security has occurred and invoke the disciplinary policy if necessary.
- Check that additional measures are in place to ensure confidentiality.
- Review and update the Data Protection Policy if required.
- Check that any information kept is necessary for Ardtona House School purpose.
- Check to see if clerical and computer procedures are adequate to ensure accuracy.
- Reassure parents that the Data Protection policy has been reviewed and additional measures to ensure security.
- Advise and inform employees of the need to ensure confidentiality through additional staff training and re implementation of the Data Protection Policy. Employees will be required to sign off to confirm they have read and understand the Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

FUNDRAISING POLICY

Principle

Ardtona House School is committed to ensuring that fundraising activities are carried out in an ethical manner. This policy applies to the management, casual, permanent and contract teachers and volunteers. (Síolta standard 16: Community Involvement) (National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians)

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this document is to identify Ardtona House School position on fundraising practice and to document the standards expected in raising funds from the community.

Policy

Ardtona House School guiding fundraising principle is a simple one – we will only use techniques that we would be happy to be used on ourselves. In doing so, the organisation will adhere to the following standards:

- Fundraising activities carried out by Ardtona House School will comply with all relevant laws.
- Any communications to the public made in the course of carrying out a fundraising activity shall be truthful and non-deceptive.
- All monies raised via fundraising activities will be for the stated purpose of the appeal and will comply with the organisation's stated mission and purpose.
- Nobody directly or indirectly employed by or volunteering for Ardtona House School shall accept commissions, bonuses or payments for fundraising activities on behalf of the organisation.
- No general solicitations shall be undertaken by telephone or door-to-door.
- All fundraising activities must have the prior approval of the Principal.
- Fundraising activities should not be undertaken if they may be detrimental to the good name or community standing of Ardtona House School

RECORD KEEPING

Principle

At Ardtona House School it is our aim to maintain all records according to the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 to ensure the health and safety of teachers and children, and to promote the development of all children attending the service. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, 7 Medical Assistance, 8 Management and Staffing, 9 Behaviour Management, Part IV, 13 Register of Pre-School Children, 14 Records, 16 Fire Safety Measures, 18 Premises and Facilities, 25(b) (vi) (Hygiene) Equipment and Materials, 27 Safety Measures, 28 Facilities for Rest and Play) (Siolta Standard 12: Communication Siolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 6: Evaluation)

Statement of Intent

- We aim to ensure that all records are factual and written impartially.
- Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1997*, parents will have access to all records pertaining to their child only.
- Teachers will only have access to records of children in their care and will be used to inform them on how best to meet the needs of each child and plan for further learning.
- Ardtona House School 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 a Child Protection issues.
- Teachers use the guided approach of Aistear and *Síolta, The National Quality Frameworks for Early Childhood Education* in relation to various aspects of record keeping within the school.

Procedures

Register of Pre-School Children

- A register is kept of every child attending the school.
- The information on the register will be up dated on an ongoing basis.

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Health and Safety

- Records will be kept in relation to medical administration and accident report forms which will be co signed by parents / guardians and .
- Written parental consent is kept to allow the school to seek medical assistance for a child in case of an emergency.
- Information on children's allergies will be displayed so that all are aware of allergies.
- The daily arrival and departure time of each child and Teacher is recorded.

Observation, Assessment and Programme Planning

- Teachers use regular observation and assessment as a means of planning for children's learning. Observations and assessments are recorded in the form of written observations and discussion, photos and use of children's work. These will in turn be shared regularly with teachers 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 school.
- An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) may be used to support the individual needs of children with additional needs. These will be regularly shared with parents and relevant professionals working with a child.
- Daily information will be recorded and shared with parents / guardians outlining settling in periods, 1:1 experiences, activities carried out etc.

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) with whom the information is relevant*
- (c) An authorised person*

Employee Records

- A recruitment policy and procedure is in place and written evidence will be kept in relation to recruitment procedures for all employee positions.
- Records outlining the name, position, qualification and experience of each employee, volunteer and student are maintained.

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- Records are kept in relation to all documents and records relating to Garda vetting and references from previous employers for all employees.
- Monitoring notes are kept relating to employee appraisals and supervision.
- The daily arrival, departure and meal break times of each employee is recorded.
- All employee records are strictly confidential (see confidentiality policy).

Records Related to the Running of the School 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 school.
- Teacher/Child ratio's within the school.
- An outline of the type of programme under which the school operates.
- Opening hours and fees.
- Policies and procedures currently in place.
- Daily attendance of all children present in the school.
- Staff roster.
- Details of any accident, injury or incident involving any of the children attending the school.

Fire Safety:

A written record will be kept of:

- (a) All fire drills which take place on the premises.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

Hygiene:

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

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- Food hygiene practices are guided and recorded under the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and the Food Hygiene Regulations 1950 – 89 and the European Communities (Hygiene of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2000.
- Record of pest control measures.

Equipment

- A record of portable electrical equipment.
- A record of equipment checks.

Outings

- A record of risk assessments carried out.
- Outing Authorisation.

Forms

Childcare Forms

Employee Forms

Record Keeping Forms

Outings Risk Assessment

CHILDCARE GOOD PRACTICE

CHILD and ADULT PROTECTION

Principles

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused. Any reasonable suspicion of abuse must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child. The welfare of children must always come first, regardless of all other considerations.

All staff and persons who work for Ardtona House School must observe the following policy and procedures. Clarification on any point may be sought from the Principal.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006) Part II 9 (2) Child Protection) (Siolta Standard 15 Legislation and Regulation, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 7: Complaints, National Standard 11; Child Protection)

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School the welfare of the child is paramount. Therefore we want to make sure that the children in Ardtona House School are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with the teachers and the students in this organisation by:

1. Making sure that our staff and students are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
2. Making sure all employees are Garda vetted prior to engagement.
3. Having clear codes of behaviour for staff and students.
4. Giving parents, children and workers information about what we do and what to expect from us.
5. Letting parents and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about.
6. We have a clear reporting procedure to be followed should an employee have a concern about a child.
7. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management Team.

Policy

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children published by the Department of Health and Children in 2011 and Our Duty to Care form the basis of our schools child protection policy and procedures. Copies of these books are in the Principals office.

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See also the Child protection and Welfare Practice Handbook available at http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CF_WelfarePracticehandbook.pdf

All and persons who work within Ardtona House School must read and understand this policy and procedures and it will be part of a new employee's induction training. Clarification on any point may be sought from the Principal.

RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Page 8 *Children First* – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
There are four principal types of child abuse as follows:

Neglect: An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults, medical care Children First 2.2.1

Emotional Abuse: When a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child Children First 2.3.1

Physical Abuse: Any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child Children First 2.4.1

Sexual Abuse: When a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others Children First 2.5.1

Ardtona House School endorses that the National Guidelines advise that the ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible.

The recognition of abuse normally runs along three stages:

- i. Considering the possibility – if a child appears to have suffered an inexplicable and suspicious looking injury, seems distressed without obvious reason, displays unusual behavioural problems or appears – fearful in the company of parents.
- ii. Observing signs of abuse – a cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Children may make direct or indirect disclosures, which should always be taken seriously. Less obvious disclosures may be gently explored with a child, without direct questioning (which the Tusla or An Garda Síochána may more usefully carry out). Play situations such as drawing or story telling may reveal significant information. Indications of harm must always be considered in relation to the child's social and family context, and it is important to always be open to alternative explanations

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- iii. Recording of information – it is important to establish the grounds for concern by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information which could be considered relevant or which might facilitate further assessment/investigation

Page 10-11 *Children First* – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

Ardtona House School will at all times have an appointed Designated Liaison Person and a deputy in the event of the Designated Liaison Person being unavailable. We will endeavour to send the Designated Liaison Person(s) on any necessary or new training courses available. **Ardtona House School's Designated Liaison Person is Principal Margot O'Connor and the deputy is Valerie Heavey their details will be displayed on the Parents board.**

The Role of the Designated Liaison Persons is to:

- Establish contact with the Duty Social Worker responsible for child protection in the organisations catchment area and ensure that the organisation's child protection policy and procedures are followed where reasonable grounds for concerns exist about individual children.
- To provide information and advice on child protection and training within the organization.
- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
- Liaise with Tusla Duty Social Worker Department/An Garda Siochana and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people within the organisation, particularly the Principal of the organisation informed.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.

The Designated Liaison Person is Responsible for

- Acting as a source of advice on child protection matters.
- For co-ordinating action within the organisation, and

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- For liaising with the Tusla and An Garda Síochána and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse where reasonable grounds for concern exist.
- Being accessible to employees and have good listening and feedback skills.
- Being familiar and updated in relation to the topic of child abuse and associated issues.

DISCLOSURES, WHAT TO DO, HOW TO REACT & LISTEN

There may be a time when a child approaches a Teacher, student or volunteer in the school as a trusted adult to discuss their life outside the organisation. It is vital that individual adults in our school know how to react to this in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

Response if a Child Discloses Abuse

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosure can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to. Do not pressurise the child. Allow him/her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Be careful when asking questions. Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification. Avoid leading questions such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else could have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation.
- Assure the child that you believe them. False disclosures are very rare.
- It is important that the adult differentiates in their own mind between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child, quite possibly,

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may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to him/her.

- It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator, while talking with the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him/her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what she/he has disclosed.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. Explain to the child that you will only tell the people that really need to know so that they are kept safe.
- By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely, that the child will return to you at another time.

Do not make promises as you may not be in a position to follow through on them

At the Earliest Possible Opportunity

- Inform the Designated Liaison Person immediately and the following internal reporting procedure will be followed.
- Record in writing what the child has said, including, as far as possible, the exact wording utilised by the child.

Ongoing Support

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that teachers continue in a supportive relationship with the child.

Disclosure is a huge step for many children.

Workers should continue to offer support, particularly through:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child.
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child.
- Continue to include the child in the usual activities.
- Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as in Reporting Procedures in this policy.

Response to a concern of child protection or welfare

In situations where a suspicion/concern may be deemed vague i.e. where there is no specific allegation but there is some concern based on the emotional behaviour and/or physical presentation of behaviour of a child. It is recommended that the Designated Liaison Person consult with the Duty Social Worker in Tusla in order to assess whether or not a report is warranted. Details of the consultation should be recorded. A formal report to Tusla may follow as advised.

RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

For an adult to recognise child abuse they have to accept the fact that it does exist. Child care workers should be aware that child abuse is not always obvious to the worker, it is also very important to remember that there may be alternative explanations to your suspicions.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern- *Children First 3.2.2*

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- Specific indication from the child that he/she was abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused.
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- See also Appendix 2 Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. It is important that persons reporting suspected child abuse to Tusla should establish the basis for their concerns. However, they should not interview the child or the child's parents in any detail about the alleged abuse. This may be more appropriately carried out by the Tusla Duty Social Worker or An Garda Síochána. If teachers, students or volunteers have any concerns these should be discussed with the Designated Liaison Person.

RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT *Children First 3.2*

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for professionals such as teachers, child care workers, health professionals and those working with adults with serious parenting difficulties. It is also an important responsibility for teachers and people involved in sports clubs, community activities, youth clubs, religious/faith sector and other organisations catering for children.

Employees and Volunteers should be aware of the centre's internal reporting procedures. Management, employees and volunteers should also be aware of the appropriate authorities to whom they should report outside the organisation if they are inhibited for any reason in reporting the incident internally or where they are dissatisfied with the internal response.

In making any report the following should be considered:

- The safety and protection of the child must take priority.
- That the principles of natural justice apply being a person is innocent until proven otherwise.
- Confidentiality is vital, a need to know basis should apply.

Tusla, The Child 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 Tusla.

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 Tusla, 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:

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‘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.

Tusla has a statutory obligation to identify children who are not receiving adequate care and protection, to provide family support services and, where necessary, to take children into the care of Tusla. People who report concerns need to be assured that their information will be carefully considered with any other information available, and a child protection assessment will only proceed where sufficient risk is identified.

Any professional who suspects child abuse or neglect should inform the parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to Tusla, The Child and Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Tusla will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous in as much as possible, but cannot give a guarantee that the information would not be sought and given within judicial proceedings. (The Data Protection Acts offer protection under privacy, but should the information be sought directly within legal proceedings, there is no guarantee.)

THE REPORTING PROCEDURE

1. Any employee who has a concern about a child in the school currently being abused, abused in the past, or likely to be at risk of abuse, is obliged to verbally relay their concern to the Designated Liaison Person as a matter of urgency.
2. The employee, who has the concern should record in writing what the child has said, including as far as possible, the exact words utilised by the child.
3. The Designated Person must then record the details of this report, on the Tusla Standard Reporting Form, which is in the Forms Folder in the Office, which must then be signed by the person making the report. See Appendix 1 for Standard Reporting Form or <http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/concerns/>
4. Unless it would put the child at further risk to do so, the Designated Liaison Person will make every effort to contact the parents to discuss the concern made by the child. A written record will be kept of this meeting with the parents.

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5. The Designated Liaison Person will examine the information received to determine if it constitutes reasonable grounds for concern see Reasonable Grounds for Concern paragraph above.
6. Immediate action must be taken to protect the child in question and indeed any other children who may be considered at 'risk'.
7. A child will never be interviewed regarding the concern by any employee of the school however all comments made by the child will be noted.
8. Allegations against employees will be dealt with separately and the disciplinary procedure will be followed as necessary.
9. In cases of emergency, where a child is deemed to be at immediate and serious risk and a Duty Social worker is unavailable, An Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending Tusla intervention.
10. Ardtona House School will take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. Close liaisons will be maintained with these authorities to achieve this.
11. Where there are reasonable grounds a report should be made to Tusla in person, by phone or in writing without delay by the Designated Liaison Person. Each area has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns. The Duty Social Worker will assess the information available.
12. Once a report is submitted, the duty social worker may need to speak with the person who had the initial concern.
13. In the event that the Designated Liaison Person makes a decision not to report to Tusla full details of the decision must be recorded including the reasons for not reporting plus any action taken. This report should be stored as confidential by the Designated Liaison Person in the child's records and kept by the school in a secure place, until the child will have reached the age of twenty one.
14. Allegations or concerns should not be investigated by the Designated Liaison Person or a teacher but passed on to Tusla /Gardaí to follow through.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES

The same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues. It is preferable to separate these issues and manage them independently. These reporting procedures should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee. , students, volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for employees including counselling where necessary. However, the primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

The Person for dealing with allegations against employees at Ardtona House School is Principal Margot O'Connor and the designated Liaison person in this instance will be Valerie Heavey. Contact details will be displayed on the parent's board.

Policy and Procedure on Response to Allegations of Abuse against Employees, Volunteers and Students

Child Protection is about promoting the welfare of children who attend the school. To this end it also encompasses the monitoring of professional practice within an organisation.

An organisation has a legal and moral responsibility to respond to any allegation of abuse either verbal or physical of a child by an employee, student or volunteer.

Ardtona House School's procedure, is in line with the guidance given in Children First- National Guidance.

Response to allegations of abuse against employees, volunteers, students Page 43 *Children First* – 6.2. Guidance on allegations against employees and volunteers

Allegations of abuse may be made against adults working with children, employees, volunteers, students and childminders. The National Guidance is there to assist the Principal /Designated Liaison Person in having due regard for the rights and interests of the child on the one hand, and those of the employee against whom the allegation is made on the other hand.

The following guidelines should be followed in the event of such an allegation of abuse against an employee during the execution of that employee's duties or where information about an employee in relation to a situation outside of the work context is reported.

Our first duty of care in this situation is to the child and our first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.

- If an allegation is made against an employee or other person working within the school to another employee or other person they must inform the Designated

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Liaison Person and the Principal verbally simultaneously and record what they have been told or what they may have observed. Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith.

- The details of this concern must be recorded on the Standard Reporting Form, which is in the Forms Folder in the Office, which must then be signed by the person making the report and they will be reminded of the need for confidentiality in this matter.
- The Principal will inform the employee that an allegation has been made against them. The disciplinary procedure for employees will be followed in this instance.

The Principal must privately inform the employee, about whom the allegation is made, of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her.
- The nature of the allegation.
- The employee should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Principal should note the response and pass on this information when making a formal report to Tusla.
- The employee should also be informed of their right to an adjournment of the meeting until such time as they can seek appropriate representation (e.g. Union Rep./Legal Rep.). The action will be guided by the agreed procedures (Disciplinary Procedure), the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice. While adhering to the principle of natural justice enshrined within our constitution in relation to the rights of the accused, the vulnerability of the alleged victim must be foremost in our mind, therefore any postponement must be afforded within a reasonable time frame that is 24 hours.
- The Parents/guardian of the alleged victim must be informed immediately by the Designated Liaison Person.
- The name or any identifying information of the reporting adult will not be given to the employee or other worker against whom the allegation has been made by the Principal, pending Tusla advice or consultation.
- When an allegation is received it will be assessed promptly and carefully.

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- The Principal may then ask the employee who the allegation has been made against to leave the premises immediately and they will be suspended on full pay until the matter has been fully investigated.
- However all allegations may not require a worker to be sent home i.e. allegations of poor practice where increased levels of supervision may be sufficient until matter is sorted out. Poor practice will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as necessary.
- At this point in the process it will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to Tusla – this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.
- If it is felt that there are grounds for concern all matters relating to the allegations, it should be reported to the Duty Social Worker.
- At this point the Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked. This will be a separate process and will be overseen by the Principal not the Designated Liaison Person
- Should an employee, following the investigation, be re-instated with no disciplinary action this should be taken as evidence that no blame/fault/suspicion attaches to them.
- Where the complaint is not upheld, management should ensure that the reputation and career prospects of the employee concerned are not adversely affected by reason of the complaint having been brought against him/her. The employee (who had the allegation made against them) should be offered counselling and any other support necessary to restore his/her confidence and morale.
- The employee who made the complaint should be reassured that management appreciates that the complaint was made in good faith. If required the school will ensure that the employee receives support e.g. external counselling, if requested or warranted.

The **Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998** makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Tusla or to any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the

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report. A person who makes a report in good faith and in the child's best interests may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

In the case where the Designated Liaison Person reaches the conclusion that reasonable grounds do not exist that she will not report the concern of the employee, student or volunteer to the relevant Tusla Social Work Department or An Garda Síochána, the individual employee, student or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the centre is not taking action. The employee, student or volunteer should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the Tusla Social Work Department or An Garda Síochána.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance at Ardtona House School and extends to all areas of our school. Confidentiality is about treating sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.

All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse should be shared on "a need to know" basis in the interests of the child. No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality. It must be clearly understood that information which is gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information. Children First advises that the issue of confidentiality should be part of the training necessary for teachers who work in the area of child protection and the general training of employees in organisations which work with children. Each organisation should have a written policy in this regard-**Children**

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It is our policy to keep all personal information about our children, families, and teachers private. Confidential and personal information about our children/parents will only be shared by the Principal and Designated Liaison Person in relation to child safety, in line with this Child Protection Policy. Any breach of confidentiality by any employee will lead to disciplinary action. (For further information see our full Confidentiality Policy)

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

Ardtona House School carries out a comprehensive and detailed recruitment procedure in order to protect our children attending the school.

All applicants should be made aware and reminded throughout the recruitment period that their application and the follow up process of recruitment will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The information supplied by the applicant and any other information supplied on their behalf should only be seen by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.

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Applicants will receive a clear job description and information on the organisation. Additional information including a copy of the centre's Child Protection Policy should also be supplied to each applicant. (For further information see our Recruitment and Selection Policy)

GARDA VETTING

In accordance with the Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006 we will ensure that all employees are Garda vetted through Barnardos.

Regulations and best practice from a child protection perspective require that schools complete vetting prior to any person being appointed or being allowed access to children. Allowing someone to start work before Garda vetting has been received is regarded as non-compliant under the Childcare Regulations.

Ardtona House School policy is that Garda vetting will be completed at three year intervals.

See the Garda Vetting policy for further information

TEACHER RATIOS

The adult/child ratios are governed by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006. Ardtona House School will follow the adult/child ratios as defined in the above Regulations.

SERVICE	AGE	ADULT/CHILD RATIO
PRIMARY SCHOOL	4 - 8 YEARS	1:20 with classroom support
SESSIONAL ECCE PLACES	3 - 5 YEARS	1:10
	3.2 – 5.7 YEARS	1:11
PART TIME	3 – 6 YEARS	1:8

RECORD KEEPING

Ardtona House School will conform to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

At Ardtona House School it is our aim to maintain all records according to the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006.

- We aim to ensure that all records are factual and written impartially.
- Parents will have access to all records pertaining to their child only.

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- will only have access to general records of children in their care and will be used to inform on how best to meet the needs of each child.
- Ardtona House School 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 a Child Protection issue.
- All record-keeping is stored in a secure location.
- Records or reports should not be altered or adjusted, if there are new developments then a new record of this information should be completed.

(For further information see our policies on Observations, Record Keeping and Data Protection)

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Ardtona House School recognises the importance of working with parents. It has an “open door” policy where families are always welcome but where the needs of all of the children in our care are always the first priority. Parents will be made feel welcome and regular exchange of information with parents and teachers will enable a two-way process of support.

Parents will be made aware of any observations, records and notes kept by Ardtona House School about their children including patterns of behaviour, conversations and any injuries/bruising they may have upon arrival to the school.

All records will be made available upon request and are kept confidentially and securely.

All parents/carers will be made aware of our policies and procedures
(For further information see our Partnership with Parents/Carers Policy)

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR TEACHERS

Childcare Good Practice

For the protection of employees, students, volunteers and children this code of behaviour has been introduced provide clarity on what is expected and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour.

- Employees should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities.

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- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.
- Employees should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they even tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- Employees should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a lot of time with any one child.
- Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to either a designated person, or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of management.
- It is recommended that Ardtona House School develops a positive attitude amongst employees and children that respects the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals
- It is not recommended that employees give lifts in their cars to individual children, especially for long journeys

(This code has been adapted from Our Duty to Care Fact sheet 1)

Visitors/Students

Visitors including inspectors, workmen, students etc should never be left alone with the children. If they are going to address the children it is incumbent upon the Management to check their credentials and to ensure that the content of the address is appropriate.

All students will be carefully supervised and monitored by the Principal. Secondary school pupils who come to Ardtona House School for 'work experience' will also be carefully supervised and monitored but must not be left alone with the children.

Under 18 years of age

If Ardtona House School takes on a Transition Year student or student under 18 years of age their parent/guardian will be required to complete and sign a Garda Parent/Guardian Consent Form. This form gives consent for the NVB to report to Ardtona House School any convictions.

Working in a safe environment – Protection of Adults and Children

Management will ensure a safe environment exists for employees and children by monitoring that all employees:

- Follow toileting procedures (For further information see Toileting Policy).
- Are listened to and any concerns expressed about unacceptable practice or behaviour of colleagues are followed up by management.

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- Are supported when dealing with challenging behaviour of children and teachers understand and follow positive behaviour management strategies. (For further information see Supporting Positive Behaviour Policy)

COMPLAINTS

- Our children/ teachers /parents have the right to voice their opinions and concerns. It is our policy to welcome all suggestions, comments and complaints in relation to our school. Any comments or suggestions can be made to any Teacher. We will give careful attention and prompt and courteous response to any suggestions, comments or complaints. (For further information see our Comments and Complaints Policy)
- If a complaint involves a child protection concern, the reporting procedure will be followed in line with our Child Protection Policy

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006, are the governing legislation

At Ardtona House School it is our policy to promote the health, well being and personal safety of all our children and teachers. Through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety. Although we adhere to all safety precautions and follow Tusla guidelines, accidents can occur. (For further information see our Accidents and Incidents and First Aid policies)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1 STANDARD REPORTING FORM

APPENDIX 2 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

APPENDIX 3 THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (1989)

APPENDIX 4 DUTY SOCIAL WORKER AND LOCAL GARDA CONTACT INFORMATION

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An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

FORM NUMBER: CC01:01:01

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W Concerns)

6. Relationships

Details of Mother		Details of Father	
Name:		Name:	
Address: (if different to child)		Address: (if different to child)	
Telephone No's:		Telephone No's:	

7. Household composition

Name	Relationship	DOB	Additional Information e.g. School/ Occupation/Other:

8. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

	Name	Address
Social Worker		
PHN		
GP		
Hospital		
School		
Gardaí		
Pre-School/Crèche/YG		
Other (specify):		

9. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Relationship to child:	Age	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Name:	Occupation		
Address:			

10. Details of person completing form

Name:		Occupation:	
Address:		Telephone No's:	
Signed		Date:	

10 13 7 13 (14 Jan '14) (unn)

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An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

FORM NUMBER: CC01:01:01

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W Concerns)

A. To Principal Social Worker/Designate: _____

1. Date of Report

2. Details of Child

Name:		Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address:		DOB			
		Age			
		School			
Alias		Correspondence address (if different)			
Telephone		Telephone			

3. Details of Persons Reporting Concern(s)

Name:		Telephone No.	
Address:		Occupation	
		Relationship to client	
Reporter wishes to remain anonymous <input type="checkbox"/>		Reporter discussed with parents/guardians <input type="checkbox"/>	

4. Parents Aware of Report

Are the child's parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported	- Mother	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment 			

5. Details of Report

(Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.)

10.13.7.13 (14 Jan '14) (unp)

APPENDIX 2

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

****THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE****

Signs and symptoms of child abuse

1. Signs and symptoms of neglect

Child neglect is the most common category of abuse. A distinction can be made between 'wilful' neglect and 'circumstantial' neglect.

'Wilful' neglect would generally incorporate a direct and deliberate deprivation by a parent/carer of a child's most basic needs, e.g. withdrawal of food, shelter, warmth, clothing, contact with others. 'Circumstantial' neglect more often may be due to stress/inability to cope by parents or carers.

Neglect is closely correlated with low socio-economic factors and corresponding physical deprivations. It is also related to parental incapacity due to learning disability, addictions or psychological disturbance.

The neglect of children is 'usually a passive form of abuse involving omission rather than acts of commission' (Skuse and Bentovim, 1994). It comprises 'both a lack of physical caretaking and supervision and a failure to fulfil the developmental needs of the child in terms of cognitive stimulation'.

Child neglect should be suspected in cases of:

- abandonment or desertion;
- children persistently being left alone without adequate care and supervision;
- malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding;
- lack of warmth;
- lack of adequate clothing;
- inattention to basic hygiene;
- lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age;
- persistent failure to attend school;
- non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also to emotional deprivation;
- failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental problems;
- exploited, overworked.

2. Characteristics of neglect

Child neglect is the most frequent category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. In addition to being the most frequently reported type of abuse; neglect is also recognised as being the most harmful. Not only does neglect generally last throughout a childhood, it also has long-term consequences into adult life. Children are more likely to die from chronic neglect than from one instance of physical abuse. It is well established that severe neglect in infancy has a serious negative impact on brain development. Neglect is associated with, but not necessarily caused by, poverty. It is strongly correlated with parental substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental illness and disability.

Neglect may be categorised into different types (adapted from Dubowitz, 1999):

Disorganised/chaotic neglect: This is typically where parenting is inconsistent and is often found in disorganised and crises-prone families. The quality of parenting is inconsistent, with a lack of certainty and routine, often resulting in emergencies regarding accommodation, finances and food. This type of neglect results in attachment disorders, promotes anxiety in children and leads to disruptive and attention-seeking behaviour, with older children proving more difficult to control and discipline. The home may be unsafe from accidental harm, with a high incident of accidents occurring.

Depressed or passive neglect: This type of neglect fits the common stereotype and is often characterised by bleak and bare accommodation, without material comfort, and with poor hygiene and little if any social and psychological stimulation. The household will have few toys and those that are there may be broken, dirty or inappropriate for age. Young children will spend long periods in cots, playpens or pushchairs. There is often a lack of food, inadequate bedding and no clean clothes. There can be a sense of hopelessness, coupled with ambivalence about improving the household situation. In such environments, children frequently are absent from school and have poor homework routines. Children subject to these circumstances are at risk of major developmental delay.

Chronic deprivation: This is most likely to occur where there is the absence of a key attachment figure. It is most often found in large institutions where infants and children may be physically well cared for, but where there is no opportunity to form an attachment with an individual carer. In these situations, children are dealt with by a range of adults and their needs are seen as part of the demands of a group of children. This form of deprivation will also be associated with poor stimulation and can result in serious developmental delays.

The following points illustrate the consequences of different types of neglect for children:

- inadequate food – failure to develop;
- household hazards – accidents;

- lack of hygiene – health and social problems;
- lack of attention to health – disease;
- inadequate mental health care – suicide or delinquency;
- inadequate emotional care – behaviour and educational;
- inadequate supervision – risk-taking behaviour;
- unstable relationship – attachment problems;
- unstable living conditions – behaviour and anxiety, risk of accidents;
- exposure to domestic violence – behaviour, physical and mental health;
- community violence – anti social behaviour.

3. Signs and symptoms of emotional neglect and abuse

Emotional neglect and abuse is found typically in a home lacking in emotional warmth. It is not necessarily associated with physical deprivation. The emotional needs of the children are not met; the parent's relationship to the child may be without empathy and devoid of emotional responsiveness.

Emotional neglect and abuse occurs when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional neglect and abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily observable. Skuse (1989) states that 'emotional abuse refers to the habitual verbal harassment of a child by disparagement, criticism, threat and ridicule, and the inversion of love, whereby verbal and non-verbal means of rejection and withdrawal are substituted'.

Emotional neglect and abuse can be identified with reference to the indices listed below. However, it should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive of emotional abuse. In the case of emotional abuse and neglect, it is more likely to impact negatively on a child where there is a cluster of indices, where these are persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

- rejection;
- lack of comfort and love;
- lack of attachment;
- lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play);
- lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned);
- continuous lack of praise and encouragement;
- serious over-protectiveness;
- inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking in bedrooms);
- family conflicts and/or violence;
- every child who is abused sexually, physically or neglected is also emotionally abused;
- inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development.

Children who are physically and sexually abused and neglected also suffer from emotional abuse

4. Signs and symptoms of physical abuse

Unsatisfactory explanations, varying explanations, frequency and clustering for the following events are high indices for concern regarding physical abuse:

- bruises (*see below for more detail*);
- fractures;
- swollen joints;
- burns/scalds (*see below for more detail*);
- abrasions/lacerations;
- haemorrhages (retinal, subdural);
- damage to body organs;
- poisonings – repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol);
- failure to thrive;
- coma/unconsciousness;
- death.

There are many different forms of physical abuse, but skin, mouth and bone injuries are the most common.

Bruises

Accidental

Accidental bruises are common at places on the body where bone is fairly close to the skin. Bruises can also be found towards the front of the body, as the child usually will fall forwards.

Accidental bruises are common on the chin, nose, forehead, elbow, knees and shins. An accident-prone child can have frequent bruises in these areas. Such bruises will be diffused, with no definite edges. Any bruising on a child before the age of mobility must be treated with concern.

Non-accidental

Bruises caused by physical abuse are more likely to occur on soft tissues, e.g. cheek, buttocks, lower back, back, thighs, calves, neck, genitalia and mouth.

Marks from slapping or grabbing may form a distinctive pattern. Slap marks might occur on buttocks/cheeks and the outlining of fingers may be seen on any part of the body. Bruises caused by direct blows with a fist have no definite pattern, but may occur in parts of the body that do not usually receive injuries by accident. A punch over the eye (black eye syndrome) or ear would be of concern. Black eyes cannot be caused by a fall on to a flat surface. Two black eyes require two injuries and must always be suspect. Other distinctive patterns of bruising may be left by the use of

straps, belts, sticks and feet. The outline of the object may be left on the child in a bruise on areas such as the back or thighs (areas covered by clothing). Bruises may be associated with shaking, which can cause serious hidden bleeding and bruising inside the skull. Any bruising around the neck is suspicious since it is very unlikely to be accidentally acquired.. Other injuries may feature – ruptured eardrum/fractured skull. Mouth injury may be a cause of concern, e.g. torn mouth (frenulum) from forced bottle-feeding.

Bone injuries

Children regularly have accidents that result in fractures. However, children's bones are more flexible than those of adults and the children themselves are lighter, so a fracture, particularly of the skull, usually signifies that considerable force has been applied.

Non-accidental

A fracture of any sort should be regarded as suspicious in a child under 8 months of age. A fracture of the skull must be regarded as particularly suspicious in a child under 3 years. Either case requires careful investigation as to the circumstances in which the fracture occurred. Swelling in the head or drowsiness may also indicate injury.

Burns

Children who have accidental burns usually have a hot liquid splashed on them by spilling or have come into contact with a hot object. The history that parents give is usually in keeping with the pattern of injury observed. However, repeated episodes may suggest inadequate care and attention to safety within the house.

Non-accidental

Children who have received non-accidental burns may exhibit a pattern that is not adequately explained by parents. The child may have been immersed in a hot liquid. The burn may show a definite line, unlike the type seen in accidental splashing. The child may also have been held against a hot object, like a radiator or a ring of a cooker, leaving distinctive marks. Cigarette burns may result in multiple small lesions in places on the skin that would not generally be exposed to danger. There may be other skin conditions that can cause similar patterns and expert paediatric advice should be sought.

Bites

Children can get bitten either by animals or humans. Animal bites (e.g. dogs) commonly puncture and tear the skin, and usually the history is definite. Small children can also bite other children.

Non-accidental

It is sometimes hard to differentiate between the bites of adults and children since measurements can be inaccurate. Any suspected adult bite mark must be taken very seriously. Consultant paediatricians may liaise with dental colleagues in order to identify marks correctly.

Poisoning

Children may commonly take medicines or chemicals that are dangerous and potentially life-threatening. Aspects of care and safety within the home need to be considered with each event.

Non-accidental

Non-accidental poisoning can occur and may be difficult to identify, but should be suspected in bizarre or recurrent episodes and when more than one child is involved. Drowsiness or hyperventilation may be a symptom.

Shaking violently

Shaking is a frequent cause of brain damage in very young children.

Fabricated/induced illness

This occurs where parents, usually the mother (according to current research and case experience), fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness. This can occur where the parent secretly administers dangerous drugs or other poisonous substances to the child or by smothering.

The symptoms that alert to the possibility of fabricated/induced illness include:

- (i) symptoms that cannot be explained by any medical tests; symptoms never observed by anyone other than the parent/carer; symptoms reported to occur only at home or when a parent/carer visits a child in hospital;
- (ii) high level of demand for investigation of symptoms without any documented physical signs;
- (iii) unexplained problems with medical treatment, such as drips coming out or lines being interfered with; presence of un-prescribed medication or poisons in the blood or urine.

5. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse often covers a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and usually occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family. Cases of sexual abuse principally come to light through:

- (a) disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends;
- (b) the suspicions of an adult;
- (c) physical symptoms.

Colburn Faller (1989) provides a description of the wide spectrum of activities by adults which can constitute child sexual abuse. These include:

Non-contact sexual abuse

- 'Offensive sexual remarks', including statements the offender makes to the child regarding the child's sexual attributes, what he or she would like to do to the child and other sexual comments.
- Obscene phone calls.
- Independent 'exposure' involving the offender showing the victim his/her private parts and/or masturbating in front of the victim.
- 'Voyeurism' involving instances when the offender observes the victim in a state of undress or in activities that provide the offender with sexual gratification. These may include activities that others do not regard as even remotely sexually stimulating.

Sexual contact

- Involving any touching of the intimate body parts. The offender may fondle or masturbate the victim, and/or get the victim to fondle and/or masturbate them. Fondling can be either outside or inside clothes. Also includes 'frottage', i.e. where offender gains sexual gratification from rubbing his/her genitals against the victim's body or clothing.

Oral-genital sexual abuse

- Involving the offender licking, kissing, sucking or biting the child's genitals or inducing the child to do the same to them.

Interfemoral sexual abuse

- Sometimes referred to as 'dry sex' or 'vulvar intercourse', involving the offender placing his penis between the child's thighs.

Penetrative sexual abuse, of which there are four types:

- 'Digital penetration', involving putting fingers in the vagina or anus, or both. Usually the victim is penetrated by the offender, but sometimes the offender gets the child to penetrate them.
- 'Penetration with objects', involving penetration of the vagina, anus or occasionally mouth with an object.
- 'Genital penetration', involving the penis entering the vagina, sometimes partially.
- 'Anal penetration' involving the penis penetrating the anus.

Sexual exploitation

- Involves situations of sexual victimisation where the person who is responsible for the exploitation may not have direct sexual contact with the child. Two types of this abuse are child pornography and child prostitution.

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- 'Child pornography' includes still photography, videos and movies, and, more recently, computer-generated pornography.
- 'Child prostitution' for the most part involves children of latency age or in adolescence. However, children as young as 4 and 5 are known to be abused in this way.

The sexual abuses described above may be found in combination with other abuses, such as physical abuse and urination and defecation on the victim. In some cases, physical abuse is an integral part of the sexual abuse; in others, drugs and alcohol may be given to the victim.

It is important to note that physical signs may not be evident in cases of sexual abuse due to the nature of the abuse and/or the fact that the disclosure was made some time after the abuse took place.

Carers and professionals should be alert to the following physical and behavioural signs:

- bleeding from the vagina/anus;
- difficulty/pain in passing urine/faeces;
- an infection may occur secondary to sexual abuse, which may or may not be a definitive sexually transmitted disease.

Professionals should be informed if a child has a persistent vaginal discharge or has warts/rash in genital area;

- noticeable and uncharacteristic change of behaviour;
- hints about sexual activity;
- age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour;
- inappropriate seductive behaviour;
- sexually aggressive behaviour with others;
- uncharacteristic sexual play with peers/toys;
- unusual reluctance to join in normal activities that involve undressing, e.g. games/swimming.

Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in young children (aged 0-10 years) include:

- mood change where the child becomes withdrawn, fearful, acting out;
- lack of concentration, especially in an educational setting;
- bed wetting, soiling;
- pains, tummy aches, headaches with no evident physical cause;
- skin disorders;
- reluctance to go to bed, nightmares, changes in sleep patterns;
- school refusal;
- separation anxiety;
- loss of appetite, overeating, hiding food.

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Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in older children (aged 10+ years) include:

- depression, isolation, anger;
- running away;
- drug, alcohol, solvent abuse;
- self-harm;
- suicide attempts;
- missing school or early school leaving;
- eating disorders.

All signs/indicators need careful assessment relative to the child's circumstances.

THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (1989)

The Convention stipulates the following general principles:

- States shall ensure each child enjoys full rights without discrimination or distinctions of any kind.
- The child's best interests shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social institutions, courts, administrative authorities or legislative bodies.
- Every child has the right to life and states shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, child survival and development.
- Children have the right to be heard.

The Convention stipulates the following substantive provisions:

Civil Rights and Freedom

- The right to a name and a nationality
- The right to a sense of identity
- The right to freedom of expression
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- The right to freedom of association
- The right to privacy
- No child shall be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Family Environment and Parental Guidance

- States must respect the responsibilities of parents and extended family members to provide guidance for children
- The convention gives parents a joint and primary responsibility for raising their children
- Children should not be separated from their parents unless this is deemed to be in the child's best interests

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own for purposes of reunion
- Children have the right to an adequate standard of living
- The Convention obliges the state to provide special protection for children deprived of a family environment
- The state has the obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children abroad by a parent or third party
- To protect children from all forms of abuse or neglect
- It is the responsibility of the state to ensure – in cases of children victims of armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation – that they receive appropriate rehabilitative care and treatment to facilitate their recovery and social integration into society
- A child placed by the state for reasons of care, protection or treatment is entitled to have that placement regularly evaluated

Basic Health and Welfare of Children

- Every child has the right to life
- Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent the survival and development of the child
- The child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health/
- Disabled children have the right to special treatment, education and care
- Children have the right to benefit from social security
- Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's mental, physical, spiritual, value systems and social development

Education, Leisure and Recreation

- Children have the right to education
- The aims of education are geared towards developing children's personalities as well as their mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent

- Children have a right to enjoy leisure, recreation and cultural activities

SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

(a) Situations of armed conflict:

- State parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 15 years of age take no part in hostilities and that no child below 15 is recruited into the armed forces
- State parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict
- Children have the right to appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration
- Special protection shall be given to refugee children or to a child seeking refugee status

(b) In situations where children are in conflict with the law:

- Regarding the administration of juvenile justice, children who come in conflict with the law have the right to treatment that promotes their dignity and self-worth, and also takes into account the child's age and aims at his/her integration into society
- Children are entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for their defence and judicial proceedings and institutional placements shall be provided wherever possible
- Any child deprived of liberty shall not be kept apart from adults unless it is in the child's best interests to do so
- A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with his/her family

(c) In situations of exploitation:

- Children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and from work that threatens their health
- Children have the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs as well as from being involved in their production and distribution

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- Children have the right to protection from sexual exploitation, and abuse, including prostitution and pornography
- It is the States obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children

(d) In situations of children belonging to a minority or indigenous group:

- Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language

APPENDIX 4

DUTY SOCIAL WORKER & LOCAL GARDA CONTACT INFORMATION

Child Protection Social Work Services

Duty Social Work Department, Chamber House, Chamber Square, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Tel 01 4686289

Office hours are from 9am-5pm daily

If the Duty Social Worker is not available at the time of contact the caller should give sufficient details to the secretary to enable the Duty Social Worker to prioritise a response.

Garda Station

Belgard Walk,

Tallaght,

Dublin 24,

Tel 01 666 6000

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Principle

It is widely accepted that children develop holistically and to enhance their whole development we must provide them with a comprehensive programme that gives them active learning experiences. All children should be supported in their learning and their experiences extended in a variety of ways that are appropriate to their stage of development.

The Childcare (Preschool Services) Amendment Regulations, 2006 are applicable from September 2007. Part II Section 5 of the 2006 Regulations together with the Whole Child Perspective as set out in the National Children's Strategy are the references used in relation to this child development policy. *Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child)* (*Siolta Standard 1: Rights of the Child, Siolta Standard 2: Environments, Siolta Standard 6: Play, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare*) (*National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with parents or Guardians, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Child Development, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 15: Children with Disabilities, National Standard 12: Health Care*)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School is committed to developing a curriculum that incorporates child development, creates a child centred play based environment, which enables young children to actively pursue their own learning, based on the above principles.

Policy and Procedure

The 2006 Preschool Regulations Part II Regulation 5 state that:

'Each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the school through the provision of the appropriate opportunities, experiences, activities, interaction and materials and equipment, have regard to the age and stage of the development of child and the child's cultural context'

Teachers will provide balanced intervention and support to encourage positive attitudes towards learning and play.

The Whole Child Perspective requires that the outcome of children's development be recognised and taken into account. The following are the outcomes taken from the Whole Child Perspective that must be considered when working with children:

Physical and Mental Well-being

This dimension is concerned with growth and development as well as physical and mental health. Service providers should ensure that the appropriate accommodation, supports and opportunities are put in place, both indoor and outdoor, to promote all areas of children's physical and mental well-being. The provider should promote the

health and well-being of children, ensure nutritious diet, prevent the spread of infection and take positive steps to prevent harm to them.

Examples of Physical Development

To allow children to develop both gross and fine motor skills, physical control, mobility and co ordination and their mental well being Ardtona House School will provide suitable equipment, small and large, indoors and outdoors.

- To help this development all areas are supervised and children can play safely
- Gross motor skills are encouraged through outdoor play, skipping, running, games, climbing frames and slides etc
- Fine motor skills are developed with a wide range of equipment i.e. crayons, scissors, paintbrushes, puzzles, pegs and boards etc
- There is a wide variety of natural materials, sand, water, clay etc. to enhance technological skills

Emotional and Behavioural Well-being

This area concerns children's feelings and actions. It includes their growing ability to adapt to change, to cope with stress and to demonstrate self-control. It also covers children's ability to empathise with others and behave in a socially responsible way. Service providers should ensure that children are treated with respect and dignity at all times. Children should be supported to form positive attachments to their carers' and other children in the service through strong affirming interaction. Children should be supported to develop a strong sense of self-esteem and self-confidence in an environment of emotional warmth and approval. Consistent boundaries are important to children's sense of security. Children should not be subjected to any degrading or abusive language or behaviour.

Examples of Emotional Development:

- Healthy emotional development is promoted in a relaxed and secure environment
- This helps children to identify names and explore their feelings both positive and negative
- Adults allow the children to express their feelings and help them to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. This will help their relationship with other children and adults

Intellectual Capacity

This dimension covers all areas of cognitive development, educational attainment and active learning from their surrounding environment. An environment that engages and enables, that responds and stimulates in support of active learning, should be provided with the appropriate access to resources, materials and social

interaction to stimulate (empower) cognitive and linguistic capacity in accordance with each child's needs and abilities. The opportunity to learn through play is of particular importance.

Examples of Language Development

Teachers should be aware that children's language develops at different rates therefore the variety of activities and opportunities for language must be as wide as possible. Teachers in the school play a vital role in helping language development by:

- Talking to the children and giving them the opportunity to practice listening and speaking
- We provide a variety of groups: e.g. books, posters, interest tables to talk about and discuss
- Everything in the room is labelled with symbols e.g. shapes, jigsaws and patterns. Boxes that contain toys are labelled showing those toys etc
- We encourage conversation in groups of different sizes. From one to one to small groups — on to the whole group
- We also provide a quiet time for all the children to expand their listening skills
- We use rhymes and songs to allow children to play with words

Examples of Intellectual Development:

- To develop intellectually a child must be helped to learn how to learn
- The children are encouraged to solve problems
- There is always sand and water for the children to play with. These develop concepts such as volume, weight, quantity, shape, size etc
- There is also the natural material used i.e. wood, clay leading them into appreciation of science and math

Spiritual and Value systems Well-being

This covers feelings, experiences and beliefs that stimulate self-awareness, wonder, reverence and the meaning and nature of life and death. Each child's own traditions of belief and observance of religious duties should be respected by the school and by other children in the school. Children's developing sense of knowing right and wrong should be nurtured.

Identity

The diversity of children's experiences, culture, gender, social background and traditions should be nurtured and valued by the service provider. The provider and

teachers must actively promote equality of opportunity, participation and anti-discriminatory practice with regard to all children in their care. This includes the promotion of mutual respect between children in their care.

Self-Care

This includes the competencies that all children require in order to look after and respect themselves. Service providers should seek ways to support children's own capacities for self-care.

Family Relationships

Children's capacity for development along this dimension is more likely to be met if they have a sense of belonging and in situations where changes of carer are kept to a minimum. Service providers should seek to support, work with and actively involve each child, child's family/carers in the child's development by providing opportunity for on-going communication about the child. These should include on-going updates of the child's activities and regular reviews of the child's well-being.

Social and Peer Relations

Ardtona House School encourages an ethos of peer education. This involves the child's ability to make friends and feel part of a peer group. Service providers should seek to support children's capacity for social development through providing opportunities for the co-operation, collaboration and friendship to develop friendships and co-operate with others. Children should be protected from bullying and assisted in learning skills to manage bullying behaviour. The importance of play in learning valuable social skills should be recognised. Opportunities should be provided for children to contribute to the shaping of the service. Opportunities for children to participate in and understand the wider community should be part of the service provision.

Examples of Social Development:

- Particularly relevant aspects are stories, songs, make believe play, outings and group projects
- The adults provide opportunities for the children to play together in settings that encourage them to learn and assert themselves and fit in as part of the group
- The adults are sensitive to the children developing play and avoid unnecessary interruption

Social Presentation

This concerns children's growing understanding of their capacity to engage with others and realise the impact of their actions, appearance and behaviour on others. Service providers should support children in their understanding of others and learn to engage in social situations.

(The main text under the nine headings is taken from the National Childcare Strategy – The Whole Child’s Perspective)

Child Development Milestone Guidelines

Ardtona House School caters for children from 3 to 8 years. The following is a guideline to teachers in relation to development milestones according to this age/stage. Teachers will have knowledge of these milestones to assist them in their observation of children.

If teachers have concerns in relation to a child they will advise parents to seek help from a professional or local Health Services.

Remember the milestones outlined below are guidelines only. Children develop at different stages and in different ways. Children should not be over or under challenged in relation to activities. Play material and equipment should be chosen to suit the needs of each individual child.

The following questions may be asked as general guidelines:

Preschool: (3-6 years old)

Developmental Milestones:

Physical

- Is able to dress and undress self.
- Has refined coordination and is learning many new skills.
- Is very active and likes to do things like climb, hop, skip and jump.

Emotional/Social

- Develops capacity to share and take turns.
- Plays cooperatively with peers.
- Is developing some independence and self-reliance.
- Is developing ethnic and gender identities.
- Learning to distinguish between reality and fantasy.
- Learning to make connections and distinctions between feelings, thoughts and actions.

Intellectual/Cognitive

- With preschoolers, their ability to understand language usually develops ahead of their speech.
- By age 6, their vocabulary will have increased to between 8,000 and 14,000 words but it is important to remember that children in this age group often repeat words without fully understanding their meaning.
- They have learned the use of most prepositions (up/down, ahead/behind, beside) and some basic possessive pronouns (mine, his, ours), and have started to master adjectives.
- Preschool children continue to be egocentric and concrete in their thinking. They are still unable to see things from another's perspective, and they reason based on specifics that they can visualise and that have importance to them (i.e. "Mam and Dad" instead of "family").
- When questioned, they can generally express who, what, where, and sometimes how, but not when or how many. They are also able to provide a fair amount of detail about a situation.
- It is important to keep in mind that children in this age range continue to have trouble with the concepts of sequence and time. As a result, they may seem inconsistent when telling a story simply because they hardly ever follow a beginning.

CHILD OBSERVATIONS and ASSESSMENT

Principles

In order to plan, prepare and organise for good quality care, adults need to observe children, review and evaluate the curriculum regularly and maintain systematic records. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 health, Welfare and Development of the Child, 9 Behaviour Management, 14 Records, 28 Facilities for Rest and Play) (Siolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation, Siolta Standard 12: Communication Siolta Standard 15: Legislation and regulation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 14: Sleep)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School recognises that observation is a useful tool and enables teachers to plan the curriculum to meet the individual needs of children.

“Assessment is the ongoing process of collecting, documenting, reflecting on, and using information to develop rich portraits of children as learners in order to support and enhance their future learning” Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum framework.

Policy and Procedure

By observing how children respond to activities, teachers will be able to evaluate if the activities and resources they have provided meet the needs of all the children. It helps them to plan a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum. Teachers should refer to the Curriculum Policy. Observations also enable teachers to provide challenge and extend the programme so that each child is able to progress.

All observations / records / assessments will be treated with confidentiality.

Sharing observations with parents/carers strengthens the partnership between the home and the school, giving understanding and information and allowing teachers and parents/carers to do their best for each child.

Observation involves watching and listening to children and using the information gathered through this to enhance their learning and development. The adult may use different types of observations depending on what he/she wants to find out. (See Figure 1) Like conversations, observations can be planned or spontaneous and are best carried out by an adult who knows the children well.

Training is essential in order to make useful observations and assessments.



Figure 1

Observations/Assessment

In order to achieve this we will:

- Give parents/carers information on observation system at parent's information sessions before the child starts in the school.
- Introduce each parent to their child's Teacher.
- All aspects of development and learning should be considered when assessing children.
- Assessment must be based on detailed observations of what children do and say.
- Written records should contain factual information.
- Carry out observations on a regular basis and share these with parents/carers at planned interviews and at any time of the year on request.
- Bring observations to planning meetings to assist in planning and organising the curriculum to help meet the individual needs of children.
- Ensure records are kept by the school in a secure place, until the child will have reached the age of twenty one.

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- Teachers should be aware of their own values and beliefs and ensure they are observing and assessing impartially.
- In assessing, the observer looks for evidence of children's progress across *Aistear's* themes:
 - **Dispositions:** for example curiosity, concentration, resilience, and perseverance
 - **Skills:** for example walking, cutting, writing, and problem-solving
 - **Attitudes and values:** for example respect for themselves and others, care for the environment, and positive attitudes to learning and to life
 - **Knowledge and understanding:** for example classifying objects using colour and size, learning 'rules' for interacting with others, finding out about people in their community, and understanding that words have meaning.

Effective Record Keeping

The school has to keep documented records. It is an important part of Child Care and a requirement set down by law that records for each child including the following are kept

- Accidents
- Administered medication
- Child's general information
- Development of each child
- Correspondence with parents

All **active** records must be held for use in the child's room. When these records become **retrospective** (no longer in use) they will be stored securely. The only exception to this is Observation Records which should be held in the rooms at all times so that a learning/developmental plan can be drawn up

Children's Learning Portfolios

A portfolio is a helpful way of compiling information about children's learning and development. The portfolio can take the form of a folder, a scrapbook, a shoe, cereal or pizza box, or something similar in which objects made by the children, photographs, stories, notes, records of care, checklists, and test scores (where relevant), are kept. This collection tells the story of each child's learning journey—his/her efforts, progress and achievement over time.

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Portfolios can help give children a sense of pride in and ownership of their own learning and development. For example, children can select work samples and photographs for their portfolios, reflect on these, and, with the adult's help, plan ahead. This experience can make learning more enjoyable and interesting for them.

Practitioner's File

Practitioners can keep a file which includes a record for each child in their group or class. This record might include details of observations, conversations with children and their parents, events, and incidents as they occur in the school. The practitioner adds to this record as necessary. In this way, it is a 'running record'.

Central Files

Certain information about children needs to be kept in a central file. This includes all relevant information regarding the individual child, e.g. name, address, date of birth, health records, allergies, development records, parents' names and contact details, medical information, reports and information from other professionals such as therapists etc. accident reports, relevant letters from parents and medication administration index cards are kept with the child's individual file. This file must be updated every quarter. These files are stored in locked cabinets.

Assessment information gathered within the school and by other professionals (for example, reports received from a therapist) should be stored safely and used only by those concerned with children's learning and development. It is also important that the information is used only for the purpose for which it was collected and documented. Information can be stored using a structured, manual filing system, and/or electronically. Where electronic records are kept, we sometimes include photographs of items made by children.

For best practice it is advisable to store relevant information until children reach their twenty-first birthday

Recording and Documenting Observations

Recording observations and making assessments contributes to the quality of children's experiences, supports their development and helps to keep them safe. The child's Key Worker will carry out these observations.

Documentation can include written notes, stories, photographs, video footage, and samples of what children make, do and say, such as models, sculptures, pictures, paintings, projects, scribed comments, responses, or statements. Adults and children use this evidence of learning to celebrate progress and achievement, and to plan the next steps in learning. Documentation also enables the adult and/or children to share information with parents. This can help parents to build on children's pre-school experiences while at home, and so make learning more enjoyable and successful. In the case of some children, documentation provides critical information in helping to identify special educational needs, in putting appropriate supports in place, and in reviewing the impact of these interventions.

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Ardtona House School, in the development of effective record keeping, uses the following criteria:

- Records serve as the starting point for those involved with the child in the present and other settings
- Information recorded should be:
 - Easy to understand -This is especially important when the records may be passed on to parents.
 - Objective - Records need to be factual, focusing on what children do and say, avoiding assumptions and inferences.
 - Easy to complete – The system for recording should be completed by teachers on a regular basis.
- Records should be reasonably easily accessible for agreed teachers, students and volunteers so information can be shared readily with families.
- Records must be kept securely and not left in vulnerable places so that breach of confidentiality is a risk.

Documentation type	Resources and method
Samples of children's work	<i>Resources:</i> children's work <i>Method:</i> The adult stores samples of children's work. Sometimes the children choose the samples, sometimes the adult decides what is chosen, and, at other times, the children and adult choose together.
Notes	<i>Resources:</i> notebook, post-its, computer with word-processing package <i>Method:</i> The adult makes brief notes, often consisting of just key words, about a particular event, activity or task. Sometimes the notes may be longer, giving details about a particular aspect of the child's learning. The notes may focus on an individual child or a group of children. Over time, the notes tell a story of what the children do, say and understand.
ICT: photographs and video	<i>Resources:</i> camera, video recorder, audio

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or audio records	<p>recorder, tapes</p> <p><i>Method:</i> The adult uses the camera or video or audio recorder to capture moments in children's learning and development. Each photograph and video or audio clip helps tell a story. A collection created over time can show the children's progress and achievements. A series of photographs can be taken on one day to show the child's progress in a particular activity.</p>
Stories	<p><i>Resources:</i> notebook, post-its, computer with word-processing package</p> <p><i>Method:</i> The adult makes brief notes about children's involvement in a particular event, activity or task. The notes may focus on an individual child's contribution or the contributions of a group of children. In contrast to notes, this type of documentation gives more detailed information about children's interactions with others, as well as the relevant objects and places, in sequence. These stories help the adult to see and understand better the progress children are making in relation to <i>Aistear's</i> dispositions, skills, attitudes and values, knowledge, and understanding. Samples of children's work and photographs can enrich the stories.</p>
Daily diaries or records of care	<p><i>Resources:</i> notebook, folder, computer with word-processing package</p> <p><i>Method:</i> The adult (often the Key Worker) makes brief notes each day about a child's routines and responses, for example what different interactions and activities. Based on behaviour, body language and verbal feedback from children, the adult may also note particular things the child likes, prefers and achieves. The diary or record is shared with parents by sending it home. Parents can be invited to comment and provide information on things that their children enjoy as well as things they find difficult.</p>
Checklists	<p><i>Resources:</i> pre-prepared checklists</p> <p><i>Method:</i> The adult uses checklists to record information about particular aspects of children's</p>

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	learning, usually at the end of a given period of time. The adult makes judgements against predetermined descriptions. These might focus, for example, on physical interaction or early literacy skills. The adult usually ticks a heading which best describes the children's progress to date.
Reports	<p><i>Resources:</i> templates for reports</p> <p><i>Method:</i> The adult uses information from a range of assessment methods and documentation to develop reports on children's learning and development. He/she shares these reports with parents. As the reports focus on a summary of children's progress and achievement, they are developed at particular times in the year, for example in the summer when the child has completed a year in the setting.</p> <p>In the case of some children, the adult may receive a report from another professional, such as a psychologist, a speech and language therapist, a play therapist, or a physiotherapist. The adult uses these reports to further inform his/her work with the children.</p>

Report Writing

A teacher will complete written records. **UPDATING OF RECORDS MUST BE DONE AT APPROPRIATE TIMES AND MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH CHILD SUPERVISION/OBSERVATION.**

The following items should be included:

- Eating pattern
- Child's general mood
- Activities attempted/completed
- Accidents, if any
- Areas of development: social, emotional and physical and any evidence of development across Aistear's themes

Regular meetings with parents are held to share information. In order to write positive and honest reports, teachers should use the following points:

- Use straightforward language
- Put opinions in their rightful place
- Support your opinions

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- Focus on what you have observed
- Describe rather than blame

Reports should be:

- Based on facts
- Reasonable
- Impartial
- Legible
- Accurate
- Confidential
- Available on request
- Dated and signed

Confidentiality

It is important to remember that reports may be used for other reasons than just sharing information with parents. Due regard should be given to the principles of the Freedom of Information Acts and the Data Protection Acts when compiling reports. Any queries on this matter should be directed to the Principal.

Confidentiality in report writing and sharing information must be maintained at all times except in Child Protection circumstances. The Principal should be consulted regarding any issues. A breach of confidentiality may invoke the Disciplinary Procedure. Please refer to Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.

Forms

Weekly Planning
Long Term Planning
Observation Record
Observation Checklist

CODE OF ETHICS - WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Principles

Young children develop best through close affectionate relationships and positive, responsive interaction with others, particularly adults but also with other children. Warm relationships are fundamental to meeting the young child's need for love, security, recognition and encouragement. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 1: Rights of the Child) (National Standard 5 Organisation and Management, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 11: Child Protection)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will ensure teachers are fully informed and knowledgeable about their critical role in the lives of the children in their care.

Policies and Procedures

Adult/child interaction is a key element of working with children. Adults should in principle allow the children lead the activity. Adults can invite the child to participate, look and listen.

This applies to ALL those working in Ardtona House School including employees, students, volunteers, SNA's, external agency staff

Adults should adopt the following practices when interacting with children

DO...

- Provide constant supervision to ensure children are safe
- Make strong eye contact
- Be at the child's level – focus on the child/children.
- Check the child is understood
- Give encouragement and positive feedback
- Work with the child to develop their skills in relation to mediation and conflict resolution
- Extend the child's language

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- Use clear communication skills – questions, responses, discussion, leading to other subjects
- Ask questions – how did you do that? - tell me about that?, how?, why?
- Use props
- Be sensitive to the child's needs and partnering play
- Ensure the child is comfortable
- Language – short repeat words, extend language – in line with the child's developmental age
- Use all occasions to engage children – greetings – lunch
- Repeat your message if something is not correct (not in negative way)
- Organise activities – that reflect children's interests – enjoyable, accessible to child
- Allow children – freedom of choices, within reason
- Listen, encourage and praise – applies to adults, children, parents
- Be a positive role model. Remember children learn what they see and hear
- Encourage children to engage in activities which will calm or relax them
- Be aware that the weather can effect children – rain, wind, heat
- Follow the child's lead
- Have FUN!

DON'T...

- Use mobile phones when supervising children
- Use abusive/threatening behaviour
- Use raised voices – speak in soft tones
- Isolate children

CURRICULUM

Principles

Ardtona House School is committed to offering the children in its care a comprehensive curriculum. Children will follow a Pre-school Montessori Programme and the National Primary School Curriculum combined with other good practice methods (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 2: Environments, Siolta Standard 7: Curriculum, Siolta Standard 6: Play, Siolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 6; Evaluation, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 16: Equal Opportunities, National Standard 19: Equipment and Materials)

“Encouraging each child’s holistic development and learning requires the implantation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme” Siolta – the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education
“Active learning, relationships, play, language, and meaningful experiences are priorities for supporting children’s early learning and development”. Aistear-The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School offers a range of learning opportunities to children, which are appropriate to the child’s stage of development. Ardtona House School is fully committed to being guided by the principles of Siolta and the new curriculum framework Aistear.

We recognise how important high-quality early childhood experience can be in children’s lives. This Curriculum aims to encourage active learning, problem solving, effective communication, creativity and socialization. It aims to give children a good start which will benefit their long-term success in life. Ardtona House School recognises the diversity of experiences and relationships that shape children’s lives.

Children learn best when they:

- Participate in making decisions as much as possible.
- Make choices and contribute to learning experiences.
- Share their opinions and diverse experiences and discuss their learning.
- Have positive role models within the team.
- Learn in a responsive and supportive social environment.

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- Learn through multi-sensory experiences.
- Participate actively in experiences that engage them emotionally, physically, cognitively and socially.

Policy and Procedure

The programme of activities offered by Ardtona House School will aim to holistically develop each and it is intrinsically linked to our child development policy. Teachers will ensure that children experience a range of activities that develop them:

- Physically
- Intellectually
- Linguistically
- Emotionally
- Socially

Aistear, The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Our programme will follow the Aistear guidelines and principles. Aistear is Ireland's curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. Aistear is designed to work with the great variety of curriculum materials currently in use in early childhood settings. Using the broad learning goals of Aistear we will adapt our curriculum to make learning even more enjoyable and rewarding for the children at Ardtona House School. Aistear contains information for parents and practitioners that will help plan for and provide challenging and enjoyable learning experiences that can enable all children to grow and develop as competent and confident learners in the context of loving relationships with others. Aistear describes the types of learning (dispositions, values and attitudes, skills, knowledge, and understanding) that are important for children in their early years, and offers ideas and suggestions as to how this learning might be nurtured. The Framework also provides guidelines on supporting children's learning through partnerships with parents, interactions, play, and assessment.

Aistear is based on 12 principles of early learning and development. These are presented in three groups:

1. Children and their lives in early childhood:

- the child's uniqueness
- equality and diversity
- children as citizens.

2. Children's connections with others:

- relationships
- parents, family and community
- the adult's role.

3. How children learn and develop:

- holistic learning and development
- active learning
- play and hands-on experiences
- relevant and meaningful experiences
- communication and language
- the learning environment.

Aistear also uses four themes that connect and overlap with each other to outline children's learning and development. The themes are:

- Well-being
- Identity and Belonging
- Communicating
- Exploring and Thinking.

Each theme includes *aims* and broad *learning goals* for all children from birth to six years (see Figure 1). The aims and goals outline the dispositions, attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and understanding that the adult nurtures in children to help them learn and develop.

Research that supports Aistear

The NCCA reviewed national and international literature when developing Aistear. The curriculum experiences of other countries also provided valuable information, in particular New Zealand, Sweden and Scotland. Much of the research used to develop Aistear is presented in four papers which you can download at www.ncca.ie/earlylearning. These are:

7 User guide *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*

Perspectives on the relationship between education and care (Hayes, 2007)

Children's early learning and development (French, 2007)

Play as a context for early learning and development (Kernan, 2007)

Supporting early learning and development through formative assessment (Dunphy, 2008).

A summary of key messages from these papers is available on the website and on the Aistear CD.

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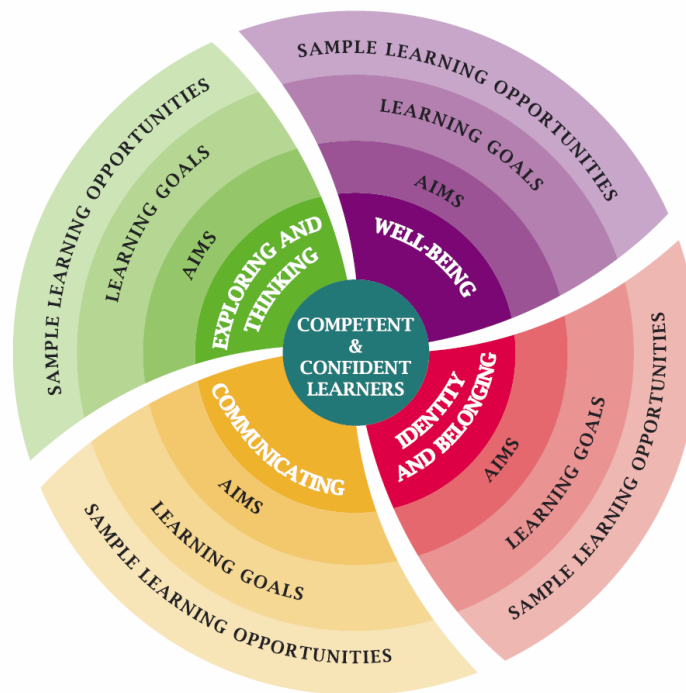


Figure 1

Curriculum Sheets

Teachers will use curriculum planning sheets. A Curriculum timetable is used. Activities should be age and stage appropriate and should include a combination of child-initiated, teacher-initiated, collaboratively planned and spontaneous activities. The Curriculum will ensure that children have a balance of activities from the 5 developmental areas listed above. The activities may be “theme based” depending on the interests of the children at the time. We aim to establish sensory-rich outdoor and indoor learning environments to support our curriculum.

The Role of Teachers

- To be a positive role model.
- To offer guidance, support and encouragement.
- To be calm and gentle in approach.
- Plan collaboratively with children as part of the curriculum decision making.
- Plan a responsive curriculum that reflects their needs and interests and complete weekly curriculum sheets.
- Use a range of learning methods including free play, real-life experiences, focused learning, routines, equipment and play materials, etc.
- Organise environments that are dynamic and responsive to children’s needs and interests.

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- Celebrate diversity and challenge/question any racism, inequality and negative attitudes.
- To be non-judgemental and to be aware of our own values and assumptions.
- Work in close partnership with parents.
- Collect evidence on how children learn and recording this evidence through observation.

Understanding children's learning

Ardtona House School teachers will plan activities based on the following significant characteristics of young children's learning:

- They learn through personal experience.
- Their understanding of other people's talk is often at the literal level.
- They understand best what they can feel (emotionally), see, touch, hear, taste and smell.
- Their attachment to particular adults and peers deepens their ability to learn from and with them.
- They are egocentric and, through experience and guidance, they learn how to cooperate, share and play collaboratively.

Equipment

At Ardtona House School it is the policy that the equipment/Montessori materials available are suitable, safe and age appropriate, while providing new exciting challenges and experiences for the developmental needs of our children. Equipment is chosen carefully and is appropriate for the early years and Montessori classroom.

- The layout of the room is carefully designed, and the equipment is low level and accessible for the children.
- The environment will encourage free choice and teaches the children to select, use and replace the materials/equipment after use.
- Some elements of the home environment will be established, our play will include clearly defined areas of interest (e.g.) home/ imaginative, sand/water, art/creative and construction play.

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- New materials will be introduced on a regular basis, based on the children's developmental needs and interests.
- Teachers are responsible for the materials ensuring that all materials/equipment used is clean, safe and well maintained at all times.
- Parents can feel confident that their child is being cared for in a safe, happy environment.
- We strongly advise parents not to let children bring their personal toys to school as they may get mislaid or broken and cause distress.

MONTESSORI CURRICULUM

The Montessori approach was designed to help children grow by letting them explore the world. The classrooms are called "prepared environments" where children are given an array of stimulating learning and purposeful activities

The Montessori Curriculum is based on the research and findings of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870- 1952). Montessori's method is structured around, and promotes, the child's natural, self-initiated impulse to become absorbed in an environment and to learn from it. Based on her observation Dr. Montessori developed specific materials techniques and curriculum areas that assist each child in reaching his/her potential.

In Montessori classes the children follow a set programme of tasks or exercises. They learn everyday life skills such as dressing themselves, washing themselves etc. They learn social graces and manners but also cover a wide range of subjects including Mathematics, Reading and Writing, History and Geography, Science, Biology, Music, Irish, Art, Drama and Literature. Subjects may vary slightly.

Curriculum Areas

English

We place a strong emphasis on the importance of language development. We recognise that a child's ability with language strongly effects their learning outcomes. The children are introduced to new ideas and concepts through listening and reading and they are encouraged to express their understanding and recount their experiences through speaking and writing. The children are introduced to reading through a phonetic programme. We have a comprehensive range of graded pre-reading and early reading materials and text books. Each child works through an individual reading programme and is given the opportunity to read daily either with the class Teacher or the reading resource Teacher.

Gaeilge

We strive to foster a positive learning experience of the Irish language. We encourage the early acquisition of the language through songs, poetry, drama, dialogue and storytelling.

Mathematics

We aim to develop a love of mathematics. We have a vast range of manipulative materials to support the acquisition and understanding of mathematical concepts and processes.

The children are enabled to acquire proficiency in fundamental mathematical skills and in recalling basic number facts at an individual pace, appropriate to their level of development and ability.

Social, Environmental, and Scientific Education (SESE)

SESE is presented under three distinctive yet closely related headings: history, geography and science. The SESE curriculum seeks to enable the children to come to an understanding of the physical world, the relationships of humans with their environment, and the historical process through which that relationship has grown. In developing this understanding, the curriculum helps the child to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes and to live as an informed and caring member of the local and wider communities.

History

We use a broad range of classroom approaches and methodologies to arouse enthusiasm and curiosity about the past. The primary curriculum is further enhanced through the use of Montessori materials helping children to develop a strong sense of their place in time.

Geography

The geography curriculum encompasses the study of the earth, its inhabitants and the interrelationships between them. The children are encouraged to explore themes of place, space and environment through the use of attractive and stimulating materials.

Science

Through the exploration and study of living and non-living things, the children are encouraged to develop a keen interest in and curiosity about the world they live in. They are taught the skills of observation, questioning, analysis and evaluation in order to develop and apply constructive thinking in scientific investigation.

Art

We place great emphasis on the importance of art in the child's development. In Ardtona we integrate art into all aspects of the curriculum. Children are introduced to a wide range of skills and materials, enabling them to have an enjoyable and

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purposeful experience of different art media and to have opportunities to explore, experiment, design, invent, imagine and communicate.

We aim to foster an appreciation and enjoyment of the visual arts and provide opportunities for the children to explore how the work of artists relates to their own work. They are introduced to the work of famous artists and a visit to the National Gallery is an annual event.

Music

Music is integrated into all aspects of the daily programme through singing and music appreciation.

The children are also introduced to Music Foundation by our visiting music Teacher, who also offers private group recorder and violin lessons through the Kodaly method.

Drama

Drama is also integrated into many aspects of the curriculum and the School Plays are always a very enjoyable experience.

We also have a visiting drama Teacher who takes each class on a weekly basis.

Physical Education

Our extensive garden offers the children great scope to enhance their physical development. Children are introduced to an appropriate range of movement and ball skills. There is a wide range of equipment available to facilitate the implementation of the P.E. programme.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Through the SPHE programme, we promote the intrapersonal and interpersonal development of each child. They are helped to recognise, understand and accept themselves and others as unique individuals who are valued and loved. We cultivate a nurturing environment, which facilitates the children's development of a strong sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

Religious Education

Religious education is developed through the Alive-0 religious education programme. Children are prepared for the Sacraments of First Penance and First Communion.

Early Childhood Education Framework Principles

Ardtona House School recognises the value and contribution of early childhood education to lifelong learning

The following set of principles provides a framework for teachers as they make decisions about their curriculum activities

1. Children are capable and competent and have been learning since birth.

Recognising children as competent learner's means recognising what they know and can do, and using that as a starting point for new learning. Children learn in different ways – from feeling, touching, music etc.

2. Children build deep understandings when they learn through all senses and are offered choice in their learning experiences.

Children develop holistically when they take in information in through all senses including touch, hearing, seeing, body movement and smell. Children engage more enthusiastically in learning when they are able to participate in decision making about learning experiences.

3. Children learn best through interactions, actively exploring, experimenting and using a variety of materials

Teachers support children by encouraging them by facilitating their learning in a range of ways such as movement, painting, drawing, speaking, writing, construction, table top activities and role play.

4. Children's positive attitudes to learning, and to themselves as learners, are essential for success in school and beyond.

Teachers have an important role in encouraging children to develop attitudes such as perseverance and a willingness to engage in new learning. Children develop attitudes when they receive feedback as they question, explore, create, invent and interact with others. Positive attitudes towards learning are also fostered by providing learning experiences that are relevant to children's lives and interests.

5. Children learn best in environments where there are supportive relationships among all partners in the learning community.

Teachers develop supportive partnerships with children, families and carers, communities and professional colleagues by:

- building a sense of child centeredness by planning with children
- involving families in supporting children's learning through sharing information and allowing families to contribute their own knowledge and perspectives
- working with external professionals (Speech therapist, Pre-school inspection team etc) to provide quality learning programs

6. Early childhood programs are most effective when they recognise, value and build upon the cultural and social experiences of children.

Children have diverse experiences in homes, communities, early care and educational settings. should ensure that learning environments reflect this diversity of cultural and social experiences as well as shared ideas, values, beliefs, and identities. Learning programs therefore acknowledge or build on children's diverse ways of thinking, knowing and behaving.

7. Building continuity of learning as children move to and through school provides foundations for their future success.

Children successfully manage transitions into school and through school when teachers establish continuities between children's prior, current and future learning.

8. Assessment of young children

Assessment involves the purposeful and ongoing monitoring of children's learning. The information gathered is used for future planning and to make judgments about a child's learning and development. Children's everyday learning experiences offer rich opportunities for gathering this evidence of learning.

Forms

Weekly Planning

Long Term Planning

EQUALITY and DIVERSITY

Principles

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states:

“It is the States obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights”. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health Welfare and Development of the Child) ([Síolta Standard 14: Identity and Belonging](#)) ([National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians](#), [National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning](#), [National Standard 9: Nurture and Wellbeing](#), [National Standard 15: Children with Disabilities](#), [National Standard 16: Equal Opportunities](#))

Statement of Intent

Equal opportunity for children to learn is a fundamental aspect of our school’s curriculum. Equality means open access for every child and family to participate in the Ardtona House School activities. Ardtona House School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. We promote equal opportunities through a wide range of policies and procedures which are reflected in the practice of our early years setting.

Policy and Procedures

We provide equal opportunities by ensuring that:

- We are aware that everyone’s tastes vary and each of us has a different way of doing things. We all have different interests and ways of expressing ourselves.
- All teachers have a responsibility to show clearly, through their work, that they respect all children and their families regardless of ability, culture, beliefs and traditions.
- Teachers are non-discriminatory, and we believe in equal attention and care for all children without regard to race, gender, national origin, ancestry or special needs. Standard.

Favouritism:

National Standard 9.8 teachers do not demonstrate favouritism towards any child. Teachers should not develop favouritism or become over involved with any one child. The children in our school should be comfortable in the care of any of our teachers. Children can feel resentful or isolated if teachers always favour one child and a child who is always over indulged or favoured can be led to feel that he or she can do no wrong and grow up to have a feeling of entitlement which may affect future relationships and behaviour as an adult.

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Meetings:

Ardtona House School will convene meetings at a time and venue that enable the majority of parents/carers to attend and to ensure equal access to information and involvement in Ardtona House School.

Access:

Everyone in the community regardless of religious affiliation, political background, race, culture, linguistic needs, disability, sexual orientation or age, has access to the school.

The Curriculum:

- All children are to be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.
- Activities and the use of play equipment will offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Through the proactive use of planning and curriculum development opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.
- It is important for children to experience a variety of cultures at an early age so that they realise that cultural diversity is part of everyday life.
- We ask families to share their own cultures, religions and traditions with our teachers so that all values are respected and celebrated in the school.
- It is our objective to support and encourage each child in their experience and guide them to embrace their own values and the values of others. These experiences help set the child's foundations and potentially shape the people they will become.

Resources:

All materials are to positively and accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity. These materials will help children to develop their self-respect and respect other people by avoiding stereotypes. We use a range of books, images, music and songs and experiences that reflect diversity. Boys and girls are to have equal opportunity, and be actively encouraged to use all activities.

Discriminatory Behaviour/Remarks:

Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/carers or teachers /volunteers is unacceptable in the school. Discrimination will be positively

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challenged by supporting the victim and helping those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices.

Festivals:

We aim to show respect for and awareness of all major events in the lives of the children and families in the school and in the wider society. Without indoctrination we aim to acknowledge festivals celebrated by all families in our local community and in the wider society through stories, activities, special food and clothing which reflect the diversity of life. We have a sensitive approach to Father's Day, Mother's Day etc. and welcome parents contributions.

Recruitment:

Ardtona House School is an equal opportunities employer- employees are selected using a fair, non- biased and strict recruitment procedure.

Language:

For us at Ardtona House School it is important that all children and their parents feel welcome and encouraged to be involved.

To help children with little or no English we will:

- Ensure inclusion in the group and teachers will talk to the child, speaking slowly and simply, demonstrating what is meant by the words.
- Support the child and parents by a teacher who will try and learn some key phrases in the child's language, e.g. 'hello' 'goodbye' 'hungry' 'thirsty' 'do you need help?'
- We encourage children to use their home language whenever they are so inclined. Dual language books are helpful to encourage the use of other languages.
- Make it easy for the child to settle into the setting, we encourage other children to talk to non English speaking children in the same way as usual.
- Parents are invited to help with key words and phrases in the child's home language.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Principles

Ardtona House School is committed to:

- Providing all children with the opportunity to access the school regardless of their ability within the expertise and resources available and in accordance with the best interests of the child
- Respecting the rights of all children to participate in a quality children's programme
- Providing a family-based approach which recognises that parents know their children best and want the best for their children
- Recognising that families are different and unique
- Recognising that all children learn in different ways and at different rates
- A child's right to social inclusion.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 3: Parents and Families, Siolta Standard 7: Curriculum, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Siolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 15: Children with Disabilities, National Standard 16: Equal Opportunities)

Statement of Intent

To provide guidelines for the successful inclusion of children with additional needs into the school.

Policy and Procedure

This policy applies to:

- Children with additional needs, as defined below, who are attending or whose parents/guardians are seeking for them to attend the school.
- Parents/guardians of children with additional needs who are attending or seeking to attend the school.
- The teachers, students and any other persons involved in the care and education of children with additional needs at the school.

Definitions

Additional needs: Children whose development, in one or more of the following areas, needs additional support - mobility, expressive and/or receptive

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communication, social behaviour, behavioural control, fine/gross motor skills, vision, hearing, self care, cognitive skills.

Disability/Special Needs: Something that incapacitates, for example an intellectual, sensory, physical, social or emotional impairment.

Inclusion: The incorporation of children with additional needs into the school to ensure that they have equal opportunities to achieve their maximum potential

Procedures

Management of Ardtona House School is responsible for:

- Providing clearly defined enrolment procedures, which endeavour to facilitate access for all children within the resources and expertise available.
- Identifying children with additional needs during the application process (the Registration form and 'All About Me'.
- Regularly reviewing with teachers, the planning and resourcing provided for children with additional needs attending Ardtona House School.
- Linking with other groups that support the child, HSE, Tusla, Voluntary Services etc.
- Working with the teachers and families to identify and apply for additional resources/support for children with additional needs.
- Providing appropriate physical and staffing resources within the budget constraints of the school.
- Supporting teachers to gain the appropriate knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy.

Ardtona House School will work in consultation with the teachers, the parents/guardians of the child, and other professionals and/or agencies working with the family to determine additional resources required to meet the functional and developmental needs of the child and to determine the suitability of Ardtona House School in meeting these needs

The teachers are responsible for:

- Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs.

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- Identifying, if additional support is required, the type of support required and consulting.
- Liaising with families and liaising with management and outside agencies to access it if possible.
- Ensuring that any support or resources available for a child are accessed in consultation with the parents/guardians.
- Ensuring that the parents/guardians are fully informed about the curriculum planned and provided for their child and have given written consent for any action, support or intervention for their child.
- To plan and implement a programme which incorporates the individual goals for the child with additional needs.
- Ensuring the programme provides opportunities for participation and interaction with other children.
- Responding to parents/guardians needs and providing support and guidance, where appropriate.
- Encouraging a collaborative family approach.
- Ensuring that, in consultation with persons involved in the care and education of the child, any specialised medical and nutritional needs of the child are catered for in the day-to-day programme.
- Ensuring that the programme incorporates opportunities for regular review and evaluation, in consultation with all persons involved in the child's care and education.

The parents/guardians will:

- Share information about their child and their child's needs within the school whilst maintaining the right to decide who will receive information about their child.
- Raise any issues/concerns they have about their child's participation in the programme.
- Be involved in, and fully informed about, any support proposed for their child.
- Be given the opportunity to consent to any observations or reports on their child and have a right to copies of such documents.

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Forms

Registration Form
All About Me

IRISH LANGUAGE

Principle

Irish is part of the curriculum Ardtona House School

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Wealth and Development of the Child)([Siolta Standard 2: Environments](#), [Siolta Standard 7: Curriculum](#), [Siolta Standard 6: Play](#), [Siolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation](#)) ([National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning](#))

Statement of Intent

Irish is used for some activities within the school. We understand that language development varies with individual children and that each child's experience is unique.

Teachers at Ardtona House School will:

- Provide opportunities for shared experiences through the medium of Irish acting as a basis for conversation and to extend understanding.
- Use verbal and non-verbal encouragement (e.g. a nod and a smile) to prompt continued speech.
- Provide a variety of props - e.g. puppets, books, and posters.
- Provide an environment rich in symbols- e.g. labels, shapes, patterns, and jigsaws.
- Aid children in becoming familiar with concepts such as under/over, behind/in front, before/after etc.
- Encourage conversation in groups of varying sizes, from one to one through small groups - to the whole group.
- Provide a quiet time to help children to refine their listening skills.
- Use rhymes, songs, and jokes to allow children to play with words.

At Ardtona House School we aim

- To develop the child's listening and communication skills.
- To foster and develop the child's ability to use Irish.

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- To foster the child's confidence in Irish and to develop their sense of pride in the language.

INTERACTION and COMMUNICATION

Principle

Through open communication and firm commitment, we are keen to develop a mutual level of respect that will consequently lead to positive relationships with children, teachers and parents that will grow from strength to strength in the coming years. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 1: Rights of the Child, Siolta Standard 3: Parents and Families, Siolta Standard 4: Consultation, Siolta Standard 5: Interactions, Siolta Standard 12: Communication)(National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 7: Complaints, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 10: Behaviour)

Statement of Intent

It is the policy of Ardtona House School teachers to encourage open and proactive communication within the organisation. In order to achieve this, we provide an open door policy whereby we would encourage each teacher to communicate any issues or concerns that they may have. We have a Comments and Complaints policy to address any issues that parents may wish to raise and we listen to children's opinions and interests when planning our activities and curriculum.

Communicating and Interacting with Children

At Ardtona House School we believe that effective adult-child interaction is essential to a successful school. Appropriate language must be used at all times when dealing with children. Adult conversations should never take place in front of children. What happened at the weekend is employee room talk not classroom talk. When talking with a child it is best to do so at child's eye level. It displays respect and in turn gains the respect of the child. Children should never be shouted at or screamed at in Ardtona House School.

Teachers should encourage positive interactions between children. They should actively engage in interactions with children individually and in groups and support in the development of relationships between both children and teachers together.

Teachers at Ardtona House School look for natural openings in children's play and then join the child or children at their physical level. As a pretend play partners, adults take roles assigned by children and stay within the play scenario the children have created.

Teachers look for opportunities for conversations with children about the activities children are engaged in. Teachers make comments about the child's activities that allow the conversation to continue without pressuring the child for a response.

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Teachers at Ardtona House School should ensure that:

- We offer a warm, welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.
- Children are comfortable and appear relaxed.
- Interactions between teachers and children are positive.
- There are opportunities for children to play in pairs, groups or individually.
- Siblings and children of different age groups mix during the day.
- They use encouragement instead of praise- Rather than statements that evaluate or judge, teachers make objective, specific comments that encourage children to expand their descriptive language and think about what they are doing.
- Whenever possible, they encourage children to solve problems for themselves. While adults could often solve the problem more easily by taking over, the goal is for children to develop their own problem-solving abilities through trial and error.
- They read and understand the Childcare policies and procedures we have developed.

Communicating with Colleagues

Teachers should inform the Principal if they must leave the premises during breaks or lunch time. This is vital for fire regulation procedures.

All teachers should be up to date on all the children attending the school especially when there is a change in the child's home background that may induce disruptive or abnormal behaviour, e.g. a new sibling, parents separation, etc.

Any information received from a parent regarding a child should be passed on to the Principal as soon as possible.

Communicating with the Principal

The Principal is there to support and advise employees and help where necessary. Any incidents that employees are concerned about should be brought to the attention of Principal no matter how minor or small the concern may seem to be.

During supervision sessions it is advisable to bring to the attention of the Principal any worries, thoughts or concerns you may have. If a teacher is concerned for a child's development and or behaviour the Principal must be consulted.

Building Positive Relationships with Families

A strong connection between families and child care providers is essential for building a positive environment for young children. Miscommunication, or limited communication between adults, can lead to situations that adversely affect all of the parties involved. Teachers **may not** discuss with parents any concerns about their child without first discussing the matter with the Principal. Any developmental or behavioural concerns should be looked at in accordance with the Child Development policy before making any judgements.

Following are some tips for families and child care professionals on how to build positive relationships.

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It's important for to gain knowledge about each individual child in their care. One way to learn about the individual personalities of young children is by observing the interactions between children and their families. For example, what are the good-bye rituals or what do the parents do to comfort their child? The younger the child, the more necessary it is for professionals to acquire this knowledge through relationships with her family.

Be attentive and open to negotiation if a parent brings a concern or complaint to your attention. Keep in mind that assertive communication - when you tell the truth and care about the listener--is the most effective form of communication.

Be sensitive to each child's cultural and family experience. Reflect the diversity of these experiences in the toys, books, decorations, and activities you choose in creating your learning environment.

Some families may be new to the area or unaware of resources in the community. Early childhood programs can be a community link by acquiring, and making available, information on a range of community resources, including hospital, health clinic, and local library programs, school and community education offerings, and family support services.

Make time for communication. Pick-up and drop-off times are often hurried occasions, however valuable information can be exchanged through these daily informal meetings. Teachers **may not** discuss concerns over development and or behavior without first discussing matters with the Principal. By simply asking how the family is doing in a non-intrusive way, adults can share information that may help the child care professional better understand a child's behaviour on any given day. For example, a child may be sad if a family member is on a business trip or if someone is ill. What may seem trivial to adults can be very important to young children.

Children benefit most from healthy, reciprocal relationships between and families. Like most relationships, these require time to nurture mutual respect, cooperation, and comfortable communication.

MULTIMEDIA

Principle

Ardtona House School recognises a variety of multimedia can provide entertainment and education to children, provided that the material listened to, watched or played is age appropriate and supervised and is a very small element of the curriculum provided. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 7: Curriculum, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 8: Care Play and Learning)

Scope

The policy covers the use of television, DVD's, music/radio computers, internet, gaming machines.

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will ensure that the use of multimedia in the school will be age appropriate and supervised when used.

Policy and Procedure

Computers

Computer skills are considered essential for accessing life-long learning and future employment. The use of the computers is built into the curriculum within Ardtona House School. Children will be supervised by teachers at all times when using Computers at Ardtona House School. Technology should be integrated into the learning environment on the same basis as other areas e.g. water area, sand area, home area.

- Access to computers is on a rostered, timed and turn taking basis.
- The software for the computers will be purchased by Ardtona House School only.
- The software purchased is educational (age and developmentally appropriate for the various age ranges that access the computers). Ardtona House School also purchase 'games' software for the computers which is also (age and developmentally appropriate for the various age ranges that access the computers).
- No software for computers may be brought to the Ardtona House School by children or parents.

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- Health and Safety issues such as viewing distances, seat, height and posture and foot rests will also be considered when using computers with children

Internet Access

The internet is now regarded as a valuable resource to support teaching and learning. At Ardtona House School we have an obligation to provide children with as safe as possible internet environment.

Core Principles of Internet Safety

Internet is becoming as common place as the TV or telephone and its effective use is an essential life skill. Unmediated internet access brings with it the possibility of placing children in embarrassing, inappropriate even dangerous situations.

- **Guided educational use:** Significant educational benefits should result from Internet use including access to information from around the world. Internet use should be carefully planned and targeted within a regulated and managed environment
- **Risk assessment:** We have a duty to ensure that children in Ardtona House School are not exposed to inappropriate information or materials. We also need to ensure that children know how to ask for help if they come across material that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- **Responsibility:** Internet safety in the playgroup depends on teachers, parents, carers and visitors taking responsibility for the use of Internet and other communication technologies such as mobile phones. It is the playgroup's responsibility to use technical solutions to limit Internet access and to monitor their effectiveness.

Why it is important for Pre-school children to access the Internet?

The Internet is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. Ardtona House School provides children with quality Internet access as part of their learning experience.

Internet access will be tailored expressly for educational use and will include appropriate filtering. Children will learn appropriate Internet use. Teachers will guide pupils in online activities.

The Internet is also used in Ardtona House School to support the professional work of teachers, to allow effective planning and to enhance Ardtona House School management information and business administration systems.

How will filtering be managed?

Ardtona House School's Principal is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate filters are applied to the PCs/laptops in Ardtona House School. The Principal will also review the sites accessed.

Teachers will monitor the websites being used by the children during sessions.

If a Teacher uses the schools PCs for work, they must ensure that they logout immediately on completing the work.

If a Teacher or children discover unsuitable sites have been accessed on the schools PCs, they must be reported to the Principal immediately so that the filters can be reviewed.

Managing Content

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that material accessed by children is appropriate and for ensuring that the use of any Internet derived materials by teachers or by children complies with copyright law.

Communication

Children will not have access to e-mail. Teachers using e-mail will use the Ardtona House School e-mail address. This address must not be used for personal e-mail.

On-line Communications and Social networking

On-line chat rooms and social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter will not be used at the school.

Teachers will not discuss individual children or the school on their personal Facebook, twitter or any other social networking site.

Mobile Technologies

Mobile phones are not permitted within the class rooms. Teachers are permitted to use their mobile phones in the office and employee cloakroom area, but the taking of photographs on mobile phones is strictly prohibited anywhere in the Ardtona House School site.

Handling Complaints

Any complaints about the appropriate use of the internet or other technologies will be handled through the Complaints procedure.

Internet access for children will be always be under strict supervision only

Television/DVD's

Television viewing is not provided for in Ardtona House School

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The DVD's will be kept to a minimum and will be used occasionally as a treat. If and when such media is employed the programme/film chosen will be age and stage appropriate and will be educational in content. Parents will be informed with adequate notice of intended usage.

Ardtona House School will ensure that if and when if at all any DVD's watched by children are compliant with the Irish Film Classification Office. This will apply to DVD's rated General (G) or Parental Guidance (PG) only. The Irish Film Classification Office rate G films and PG films as:

General

- A film classified as 'General' should be suitable for children of school going age.
- Not every child will respond in the same way to particular themes, scenes and images. What might amuse one child, may upset or frighten another, so parents, who know their own children best, should decide what is appropriate.

Parental Guidance

- A film with a 'PG' cert may not be watched by unaccompanied children of any age.
- However, because some element within the overall film might be unsettling for younger children, parents are strongly advised to satisfy themselves in advance as to whether the film is appropriate for their younger children.

Should parents not wish their child to watch television/DVD alternative activities will be engaged with by the teachers with those children.

The Principal will ensure that an up to date TV license is held.

Gaming Machines EG Play Station, Nintendo Wii, Xbox

Gaming machines are not used in the school.

Music CD's

At Ardtona House School we value music because it is a powerful and unique form of communication that can change the way children feel, think and act. It also increases self-discipline and creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and fulfilment.

The CD's used are appropriate for young children and will contain no offensive or inappropriate language

Radios stations will not be listened to in areas where children can hear them as the content may not be suitable.

Music will not be played too loud so that the children's voices may still be heard.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Principle

Outdoor play is essential to early childhood development. Children learn social skills by interacting with other children, with adults and even with objects and natural materials found in the environment. The outdoor environment exposes children to opportunities to explore, question and develop theories about how things work. Negotiation, language and co-operation are all skills that develop through a well planned outdoor curriculum. Outdoor play, physical activity and fresh air are important to children's overall health and well-being. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 2: Environment, Siolta Standard 6: Play, Siolta Standard 7: Curriculum, Siolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation) (National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily curriculum at Ardtona House School. We aim to ensure that children play outdoors every day, as weather permits. Our intention, through our outdoor programme is to enhance gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance and body awareness. It also gives children opportunities to socialise freely and use imagination and initiative.

Policy and Procedures

A well planned environment provides opportunities for children to seek new challenge as they master old ones. The provision and planning for outdoor play, just as indoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children. Natural play spaces can stimulate children's imaginations and engage their sense of curiosity.

Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum. We will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors. The garden time is play time for the children. The Teacher is there to supervise and lead garden games or play, and ensure that the children are in no danger to themselves or their peers.

Garden time is an extension of indoor activities therefore sitting should be kept to an absolute minimum.

- Teachers should ensure that their presence and position in the outdoor play area allows that all areas of the outdoor area are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one Teacher, at all times.
- The outdoor play area must be checked by a Teacher for safety before any children use the outdoor play area.

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- Teachers **must engage** with the children during the outdoor play time. The curriculum should be used outdoors as well as in the children's room.
- Children should not be allowed interfere with the gate in the outside area.

Clothing

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Parents/guardians are asked to ensure their children have the appropriate attire for the weather.

Sun Safety

Ardtona House School request that parents:

- Apply sun cream to their child/children before they attend school. As in the first instance it is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun cream to their child/children.
- If necessary put sun cream in the child's bag and request the teacher to apply the sun cream, every effort will be made by the Teacher to do this.
- Parents provide a sunhat for children.

Ardtona House School will ensure that:

- On very hot days children will have reduced exposure to sunlight in the middle of the day.
- Where possible, children can seek shade when outside in the sun.
- Ensure that children will wear a sunhat if provided by the parent.

Adult/Child Ratios

The adult/child ratio for outdoor play will be in compliance with the Preschool Regulations, teachers will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors.

A rota system is usually practised by the teachers in relation to classes going outdoors. Where there is exceptionally good weather all children may be outdoors at the same time. In such a situation teachers will be cognisant of this fact and give due consideration to the supervision and safety of the children.

Outdoor Programme

- Ardtona House School will ensure that children have access to a range of outdoor activities to: climb, run, crawl, balance, jump, throw, catch, pour, sort, pretend and access different levels.

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- The outdoor programme encourages children to participate in growing vegetables and planting flowers.
- A variety of activities take place outdoors and children can utilise a range of outdoor equipment.
- The outdoor play area will be safe and scaled to a child's size.
- The outdoor time will be maximised through an intentional, well-planned approach to arranging the space and using the time.
- The programme will create a positive tone supporting a child's natural curiosity in playing outdoors.
- There will be opportunities for children to encounter and interact with each other.
- Children will be given the freedom to select safe materials to use outdoors to build upon their natural sense of exploration.
- The outdoor space offers choices for children.
- The programme will be child-led where active problem solving will be encouraged.
- Children and adults will interact in a relaxed and natural way.

Buntus

Teachers have also taken part in Buntús Start training. Buntús Start is a comprehensive physical activity programme for children aged 2-5 years old. It has been designed for use in pre-school settings so that can provide a wide range of learning opportunities for young children to develop their fundamental motor skills, manipulative skills, co-ordination and balancing skills and develop a positive attitude to physical activity.

Interactions

Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role.

Adults should be

- Talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating).
- Helping children to find solutions to problems.

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- Supporting, encouraging.
- Extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas.
- Initiating games and activities.
- Joining in games and activities when invited by children.
- Observing, assessing and recording.
- Being aware of safety issues.
- Being aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability.
- Evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences.

Storage

Equipment such as balls, bats, skipping ropes, hula hoops etc should be stored appropriately.

Outdoor Safety

- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, teachers must lookout for safety and remove any objects such as cans, bottles etc. which may have been left by others.
- The area should be checked for animal droppings.
- Before children go outside a member of teachers must check the main gate is closed.
- Children access the garden down the stairs (children will not be left unattended on the stairs)
- Teachers on duty outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the play area for any reason unless another member of teachers has taken over responsibility.
- There must be at least two teachers on duty in the outside area.

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- It is most important for teachers to move around the area constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. Each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised.
- At the end of the session the areas should be scanned carefully in case children should be left outside unsupervised.
- If hot drinks are taken into the outdoor area, they must be in insulated, covered containers.
- Students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of any area.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.
- If a child is injured he/she should be taken indoors for treatment quickly as possible if necessary; if possible the child should be treated with the portable first aid kit outdoors. Both child and teacher should remain within sight of another teacher while treatment takes place, The floating teacher or the teacher in the garden should replace the teacher treating the child so that supervision of the areas is interrupted for as short a period of time as possible.
- Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the first aid book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment.
- Students/volunteers may not administer first aid.
- Climbing apparatus should only be set out on the safety surface.
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys and climbing equipment.
- If it is necessary for teacher to put toys away whilst children are still in the play areas, there must always be at least one other teacher supervising remaining children in the area.
- Encourage children always to look before they move on the slide, or when jumping off apparatus; also encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front.
- When children are climbing on climbing frames, teachers must be continually aware of any risks (e.g. objects left underneath).

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- Whenever children carry equipment (clearing away or carrying planks, blocks etc etc.) they should be taught how to do it and adults should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.

Forms

Sun Cream Record

OUTINGS

Principle

It is part of the child's development to experience fresh air and access to a variety of outdoor experiences. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and development of the Child, Part VI 30 (i) Insurance) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Siolta Standard 16: Community Involvement) (National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 20: Safety, National Standard 12: Health Care)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School is committed to planning and undertaking appropriate supervised outings.

Policy and Procedure

- **The location for the outing should be familiar to teachers and a risk assessment should be carried out prior to the visit with the children. Risk assessment forms should be completed and kept for inspection.**
- A consent form must be given to and signed by a Parent / Carer for trips or outings.
- Ratio of children to adults will be in compliance with the pre-school regulations and the Insurance policy.
- Each child must have a sticker with the phone number of the mobile phone, Ardtona House School phone number and the name of the school, not the child's name.
- The teacher must be responsible for listing each child present and assigning them to a specific teachers. This teacher must be solely responsible for the child/children in their care.
- A safety briefing will be given to all adults involved in the outing.
- Teachers must be responsible for checking numbers of children, doing a head count and recording names of children, before leaving the premises, and several times while out on the outing, before returning and on return to the school.

Bring the Following on Outings:

- Contact numbers for each child — Parents/Carer.

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- Mobile phone, ensure it is charged properly and if credit is needed that there is plenty of credit in the phone. All contact numbers should be stored in the phone.
- Food and plenty of fresh water especially if it is a hot day these should be chilled before leaving.
- Sun cream and sun hats or rainwear, depending on the weather.
- Balls, rings, skipping ropes etc. for the children to play games if appropriate.
- A watch with the correct time. Before leaving teachers should say what time they will be returning and if the time runs late they should ring the Principal to inform them of this.
- Always bring a good supply of tissues or baby wipes and a small travel first aid kit.

Transport on Outings

In the event that transport is required for outings the following must apply:

- The private transport must be properly insured. A copy of the insurance policy should be requested and held on file.
- They must provide seat belts and if required booster seats for children.
- Information can be sought from the Road Safety Authority.

Managing medicines on trips and outings

If children are going on outings, teachers accompanying the children must include the key person for the child with a risk assessment, or another teacher who is fully informed about the child's needs and/or medication.

- Medication for a child is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name and the name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form and a card to record when it has been given, with the details as given above.
- On returning to the setting the card is stapled to the medicine record book and the parent signs it.
- If a child on medication has to be taken to hospital, the child's medication is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name and the name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form signed by the parent.

Forms

Outing Authorisation

Outing Risk Assessment Forms

PHYSICAL PLAY

Principle

Ardtona House School aims to provide the appropriate accommodation, supports and opportunities both indoor and outdoor to support all areas of children's physical well-being, growth and development.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, Part V, 18 Premises and Facilities) (Siolta Standard 6: Play, Siolta Standard 7: Curriculum, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 19: Equipment and Materials)

Statement of Intent

- We have regard for 'Ready, Steady, Play!' The National Play Policy.
- We ensure all children have opportunity to enhance their physical development.
- We aim to provide a wide range of quality physical activity opportunities both within and outside the set curriculum for children.
- We aim to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop their confidence, self esteem and enthusiasm to participate in physical activity.
- We aim to establish a genuine interest in physical activity among children and promote the importance of physical play with parents.

Policy and Procedure

- All areas of the setting are well supervised and appropriate levels of teachers are present to ensure children have the freedom to move around and play safely
- Children are given daily opportunities to play outdoors including planned and unplanned physical activities.
- The outdoor play area is viewed by all as an extension to the indoor environment and teachers recognise the importance of physical activity both in the outdoor and indoor environment.
- Outdoor equipment is appropriate to the age and stage of development of all children in the school.

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- Weather proof clothing including Wellingtons should be provided by the parent and left in the setting (e.g. sun hats, rain jackets etc.) to allow for outdoor activities all year round.
- Provisions are in place for children with additional needs to participate in physical play activities.
- Teachers will ensure that physical activities will be fun and as non-competitive as possible.

Buntús

Teachers are trained in 'Buntus Start' and provisions are made in the weekly plan to include this.

Buntús Start is a comprehensive physical activity programme for children aged 2-5 years old. It has been designed for use in pre-school settings so that can provide a wide range of learning opportunities for young children to develop their fundamental motor skills, manipulative skills, co-ordination and balancing skills and develop a positive attitude to physical activity.

Buntús Start helps adults working with children to establish positive attitudes to activity and a healthy lifestyle through enjoyable activity with children. It offers a wealth of physical learning opportunities to enable children realize their potential and to become active and independent learners through play.

Indoor Environment

- Teachers ensure that children are encouraged and given opportunity throughout the day to move freely around the indoor environment, children are never static for long periods of time.
- Planned daily activities in the setting include opportunities for physical activity, e.g. music and movement and drama.

Outdoor Environment

- The outdoor environment is safe, well maintained and easily accessible to all children and adults in the setting regardless of ability/disability.
- Equipment in the outdoor environment provides a range of opportunities for children to enhance their learning and development e.g. climbing, balancing, creativity and problem solving, pouring, swinging, digging and planting.
- Opportunities are provided for children to explore other outdoor environments apart from the immediate setting e.g. taken out for walks/ outings.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Principal

At Ardtona House School we believe children are competent and confident learners. *We believe that children should be supported to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions and behaviour.* We acknowledge children are continually learning about their emotions, feelings and to manage same. Through positive and reciprocal relationships with the teachers, positive behaviour is encouraged from all children. We will ensure expectations on behaviour are fair and consistent to all children depending on their age and stage of development.

We will ensure that all children are treated with respect, by adults and other children alike to allow children to develop and sustain a positive sense of self. As a result, children will feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included. In supporting positive behaviour, children's well-being is crucial. Any punishment which humiliates, has a negative impact on a child's sense of self, or makes them feel incompetent is damaging for that child, and other children to witness. This is NEVER permitted in an early year's setting. [Child Care \(Pre-school Services\) \(no 2\) Regulations 2006](#) and [Child Care \(Pre-school Services \(No 2\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2006 Part II 9. \(1 – 3\) Behaviour Management\)](#) ([Síolta Standard 5: Interactions](#)) ([National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians](#), [National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being](#), [National Standard 10: Behaviour](#)) Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Statement of Intent

We will work with the children to ensure they receive positive guidance, support, and encouragement to finding positive solutions to manage their own behaviour. Ardtona House School sets realistic expectations of behaviour in accordance with the age and stage of development of the child. We apply rules and expectations fairly and consistently to all children. We do not use any form of physical punishment. We encourage children to respect themselves, others and the environment. We facilitate children to make positive decisions and choices about their own learning and development to develop a positive sense of self. We aim to facilitate a happy, caring environment with stimulating activities for all children. In the case of a particular incident, or persistent unacceptable behaviour, we will *always* discuss ways forward with the parent(s)/Guardian of the child.

General Procedures for Encouraging and Nurturing Positive Behaviour

- During the induction period, all new teachers are introduced to the behaviour policy and are asked to sign the policy to say they have read it, and agree to implement the policy.
- Teachers will adopt a reciprocal and positive relationship with the child.

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- Teachers will act as a role model and adopt a confident approach to encourage and support positive behaviour.
- Teachers will work in a respectful manner and in partnership with other practitioners, children and parents.
- Teachers are role models for the children and should treat one another with respect, use appropriate tone of voice and body language to one another and the children.
- Teachers will acknowledge and praise positive behaviour as it occurs.
- Teachers will provide a calm, safe and stimulating environment which is age appropriate and of interest to all children present within the group.
- A routine and rhythm which is practical and beneficial to the age range of children should be developed and sustained.
- Teachers will ensure rules are applied consistently to all children within the setting. And are aware expectations regarding the children's behaviour.
- Each child should be positively supported and recognised as an individual.
- Teachers will practically engage children in resolving their conflicts using age appropriate methods. In doing this, children can explore their feelings and conflicts in a safe controlled way. We will positively support children in doing this.
- Correct Child:Adult ratio's will be implemented according to the Child Care (Pre-School) Services Regulation's (2006) at all times.
- Observation and recording will be used to inform and support teachers to decide on appropriate methods and strategies of dealing with behaviour problems.
- All teachers should understand how to support positive behaviour, and how to encourage and facilitate it effectively. Training will be provided where necessary.
- Positive language will be used rather than negative and statements made rather than saying 'no' for example:
 - Say: *"I would like you to sit back down on the chair please John, because you will fall off and hurt yourself". or "We are inside and we don't climb on furniture or equipment inside". Or "I would like you to sit back down on the*

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chair please, do you remember we only climb on things when we are outside”,

- Rather than: *Don't stand on the chair”*
- The Principal is the person designated as the resource person for teacher support on behaviour management issues.
- At an age appropriate level, children will be encouraged and supported in resolving their own disputes.
- Children have regular daily access to the outdoor play area.
- Children are kept informed of what is happening and what is expected of them.
- While encouraging positive behaviour, the child's self-esteem should not be negatively impacted. The child should not be labelled through the use of certain words for example bold, naughty.

Implementing Positive Steps to Supporting Positive Behaviour

- Children should be made aware of the expectations and their responsibility
 - No hurting bodies*
 - No hurting feelings*
- Positive behaviour should be supported and encouraged from all children consistently throughout the day by all teachers.
- Incidents should be dealt with immediately by the teacher who witnesses it.
- Teachers should not speak about the child, or their behaviour in front of other parents, children or the child.
- The child should not be labelled by teachers.
- Positive behaviour should be consistently encouraged to **all children**.
- Correct Child: Adult ratios should be implemented at all times.
- Positive behaviour should be implemented within the curriculum throughout various themes. Age appropriate activities, prompts and materials should be provided to children to explore their feelings and emotions throughout the year.

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- The teacher where possible should have a quiet area where children can retreat if they are experiencing negative feelings for example a quiet corner.
- At an age and developmental appropriate level, when the child is calm, the teacher should explore the behaviour with the child using prompts for example I noticed you got [feeling] when you were at the [area].....what could you do the next time you feel....Do you know what I do when I am [emotion]...

Procedures for Supporting Positive Behaviour

ABCD; Action Behaviour Choice Decision

Minor Behaviour Problems

In these type of situations the child may have caused no issue and all day and suddenly their behaviour changes. Minor behaviour problems are behaviours in line with the child's age and stage of their development (See Appendix I). Teachers should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour. The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

Teachers will assess each situation and use their best judgement in dealing with the matter. Situations may arise where the Teacher may allow the children 'resolve their own battles' or ignore minor incidents. A sensible approach is recommended in dealing with minor behaviour problems. It is not always evident to the teacher what the cause of an incident has been

Age of child	Approach	Examples of behaviour
2- 3yrs 3-5 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approach calmly2. Stop any hurtful actions.3. Acknowledge children's feelings.4. Gather information.5. Restate the problem.6. Ask for ideas for solutions and decide on an outcome the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temper tantrums• Possessive of toys• Fussy feeder• Use of bad language• Whingy• Verbally hits out• May be bossy

If a child has a temper tantrum, the age of the child is taken into consideration. A child **under** three years is more likely to have tantrum out of frustration. A child **over** three years is more likely to be linked to defiance. Teachers will take a more gentle approach with the younger child and a firmer approach with the older child. Teachers will explain to the older child in a calm clear way using simple words why they cannot have what they want. If the tantrum continues and other children are getting upset or hit the child will be moved to another area in the room until they calm

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down. The Teacher should act in a calm and fair manner and allow the child to rejoin the activity when they have calmed down as if nothing has happened.

At this stage, boundaries should be highlighted to the child. The expectations **must** be clear and reasonable to the age of the child and their developmental level.

Where it is evident that a child is about to misbehave for example taking a toy from another child then the Teacher should comment on the behaviour. *'Mary, you know we take turns and share. Angela will let you have that toy [name toy or doll] to play with when she is finished. Will we ask Angela to let you have that toy when she is finished?'* This provides the child with an opportunity to change the behaviour and not take the toy from the other child. If the child continues a second reminder should be given and what the consequences will be if they continue.

Managing Moderate Behaviour Problems

ABCD; Action Behaviour Choice Decision

Moderate behaviour problems tend to happen more frequently than the 'once off' type behaviours and have a greater impact on the child themselves and other children in the room. Teachers should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour. The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

Age of child	Approach
2- 3yrs 3-5 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.2. Acknowledge children's feelings.3. Gather information.4. Restate the problem.5. Ask for ideas for solutions and6. Choose a decision together.7. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for Supporting Positive Behaviour8. Observe the child

The teacher will ask the child what is wrong or bothering them. Emotion picture cards may be used with younger children to support how they may be feeling.

Observations will be used to assist making an assessment as to what may cause the behaviour. Observations will be used to capture when the child's behaviour is more positive as when behaviour is more challenging children are regularly corrected. Constant correction can have a negative impact on the child's self esteem. We will use the observation of 'positive' behaviours to give plenty of encouragement and praise which should help to develop self esteem.

This approach can be shared with parents and used at home and in the School.

Observations should be looking for;

- When the child is at their best behaviour and when they 'act out'.
- Consideration will be given to whether the child likes the activity or not, is there a particular child they don't get on with, are they tired, hungry, or perhaps ill?
- If the group of children are becoming disruptive review the activities the teachers will review activities to ensure children do not become bored or sit for too long.

Teachers will consider changing the layout of the room regularly, and perhaps changing the daily routine to ensure that there is variety and children do not become bored

Teachers will consider liaising with the designated teacher responsible for behaviour management for support when they have used strategies that have not seen an improvement in behaviour.

Managing Severe & Challenging Behaviour

ABCD; Action Behaviour Choice Decision

Severe and challenging behaviours are frequent and repeated actions by a child that impact significantly on other children and the child themselves. The child may also find it difficult to engage in the activities being undertaken. In this type of situation the behaviour has not improved using the usual behaviour management strategies and may often require more intensive one-to-one support to the child. Teachers understand that it is important to recognise in managing severe/challenging behaviour that there is a problem.

Teachers will discuss the behaviour problem with the designated teacher who has overall responsibility for managing children's behaviour problems to put an action plan together.

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	Approach	Examples of behaviour
At any age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions. 2. Make eye contact with the child 3. Acknowledge children's feelings. 4. Gather information. 5. Restate the problem and ensure the child understands 6. Suggest solutions and choose one together. 7. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for supporting Positive Behaviour 8. Observe the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kicking, • hitting, • bad language, • prolonged screaming, breath holding, • head banging, • ongoing biting, <p>Other behaviours may present as the child refusing to engage, being over anxious, avoiding contact with others and unusual behaviours.</p>

Teachers will ensure that instructions or corrections are given in simple words and kept short and that similar phrases are used by all teachers and the child's parents so that the information been given to the child is consistent.

Where a child is receiving professional support Ardtona House School will work with the parents and the professionals to implement the programme or approaches recommended.

A behaviour management strategy plan will be drawn up based on observations and professional support guidance {PHN or others} where possible. All will adopt the same approach to what to do when the child shows signs that the challenging behaviour is about to be presented, how best to manage that behaviour when it happens, how to limit the negative impact on other children or activities and strategies that can be taught to the child to help them control their own behaviour.

Ardtona House School will engage and work with the parents to work towards the same approach at home and in the school to behaviour management

Procedures Which Are Unacceptable For Supporting Positive Behaviour

- Physical punishment.
- Sending children out of the room.
- Isolating children from the group e.g. time out

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- Shouting or raising of your voice
- Physical restraint for example holding will not be used unless it is required to prevent injury to child, other children, adults or property. In cases where it is required to hold a child in such manner, it **must** be recorded in the accident and incident report. Parents **must** be informed of the incident.
- Speaking negatively about the child to other teachers *or* in front of the child/other children.
- The child should not be labelled.
- Teachers should not expect unrealistic behaviour from a child in accordance with their age and stage of development.
- Once the incident is over, the teacher should not place emphasis or keep reminding the child of their behaviour.
- The child should not be humiliated.
- Withholding food or drinks.
- Showing favouritism.
- Failing to reassure or comfort a child.

Partnership with Parent(s)/Guardians

- It is our policy to work in close collaboration with parents. We recognise and value the role of parent(s)/ Guardians in their child's life. In supporting positive behaviour, working in partnership with parent(s)/ Guardians is important. It is our policy to inform parent(s)/ Guardians at the enrolment stage, of the policies and procedures in relation to behaviour. The supporting positive behaviour policy will be explained, in doing this, a consistent approach can be adopted.
- Parent(s)/Guardians are encouraged to share any difficulties/concerns which they may be experiencing regarding the child's behaviour for example bereavement, illness, a new baby etc.
- Where a child's behaviour is causing concern, it is our policy to do this in a consultative manner, and teachers will endeavour to work in partnership with the parent(s)/ Guardian to develop a strategy for dealing with the situation.

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- Discussing the child's behaviour in front of the child/ other children/parents will be avoided.

Where a significant incident occurs regarding a child's behaviour, the following should be documented.

- The child's full name
- Time and location of the incident
- Events leading up to the incident
- What happened
- Others involved
- Witnesses
- How the situation was handled (**ABCD**)
- Follow up with the children

Anti-bullying

Children are afforded a right to their own time and space. Depending on the child's age and stage of development, it may not be appropriate to expect children to share. However, we feel it is important to acknowledge both children's feelings, and to support them in understanding how the other child may be feeling.

Diversity and equality is important for children to understand, and we endeavour to create a positive and supportive environment for all children. Teachers will encourage all children to acknowledge and celebrate difference. Consequently, children will recognise from an early age, bullying, fighting, hurting and racial comments are not acceptable behaviour.

Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. Any form of bullying is **unacceptable** and will be dealt with immediately. At our school, teachers follow the guidelines below to ensure children do not experience bullying.

- Teachers ensure all children feel safe, happy and secure within the setting.
- Teachers develop positive relationships with all children, and encourage children to speak about their feelings.
- Teachers are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is a part of children's development, and recognise positive opportunities should be in place for children to channel this positively.

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- Children are learning about their feelings, teachers will support children in identifying their feelings and actions for example happy, sad, angry.
- At an age and stage appropriate level, children will be encouraged to resolve their problems and take responsibility for their actions.
- Teachers are encouraged to adopt a policy of intervention when they think a child is not being treated in a fair or appropriate manner.
- Teachers are aware when play becomes 'aggressive', and will initiate an appropriate activity with the children.
- Any instance of bullying will be discussed fully with the parents of all involved to look for a consistent resolution to the behaviour.
- If a parent(s)/ Guardian have a concern regarding their child's behaviour, the teacher or Principal will be available to speak to the parent. It is through partnership with Parent(s)/ Guardians which we can ensure a child will feel confident and secure in their environment, at home and in the setting.

BULLYING AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS NOT TOLERATED WITHIN THE SCHOOL, WHETHER INFLICTED ON ADULTS OR CHILDREN.

What causes children to be aggressive?

Sometimes, aggression takes the form of instigating fights, sometimes the child may provoke other children to fight, or may antagonise or threaten other children. Other children do not like this behaviour, and will often feel intimidated and insecure in their environment.

Children who display aggressive behaviours will often have low self-confidence, poor social skills and may have difficulties with their speech. However, any child regardless of their age or stage of development may experience aggression at some stage. Aggression brings power, and often children who are aggressive will seek the control and position which comes with it among their peers.

How can we support positive behaviour?

- Aggressive behaviour should never be ignored.
- Teachers should not get into a power struggle with the child.
- Be firm but gentle in your approach. The child should not be given mixed messages at this stage.
- The child should always feel valued, respected, cared for, and included.

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- One-to-one work should be initiated with the child, and a plan should be devised. For example when I get angry, I will go to the.....[area].
- Provide opportunity for the child to display positive behaviour, acknowledge and praise this behaviour.
- Provide the child with opportunities which demonstrates leadership and communication in a positive manner.
- The **ABCD** model should be used with the child, where age and stage appropriate, the child should make the choice, and also take responsibility for their actions.
- The teacher should be fair in their expectations, and should be consistent, patient and understand change will take time.

Rough and Tumble play/ Fantasy Aggression

Young children often engage in play which has aggressive themes- such as superhero and weapon play. This may take over some children's play. This is an interest of that particular child, and *it is not a precursor for bullying*. We will ensure the behaviour does not become inconsiderate or hurtful, and will address it if we feel necessary.

- We recognise rough and tumble play is part of children's development, and it is acceptable within limits. We view this type of play as role play, and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will offer opportunities for children to explore this type of play in a safe and secure environment.
- Children will be aware of the boundaries with this form of play, and will be aware when this behaviour is not acceptable.
- We recognise fantasy play may contain violent dramatic strategies- blowing up, shooting etc. We will use these opportunities to explore lateral thinking and conflict resolution. These themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies', we will use such opportunities to explore concepts of right and wrong, and alternatives to the dramatic strategies.

Biting

Biting happens in almost all childcare settings where young children are together and dealing with biting can be challenging. Biting is a developmental stage which children may go through. All biting incidents are upsetting for children, and will be dealt with in a calm and clear manner. The Teacher will use clear language and be

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consistent in their approach. We aim to support children in developing self-control; however, the safety of each child is our primary concern.

Why do children bite?

- Children may be teething, and it may feel good to bite and chew.
- Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult to express, and at times control.
- Biting sometimes occurs for no apparent reason.

Biting prevention

- The correct child: adult ratios will be in place within the setting at all times.
- The layout of the room will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child, and can see all children at all times from all areas of the room.
- Teachers are aware when children are teething, and offer materials/foods which may soothe.
- Age and stage appropriate materials are present within the room for children to access at all times.
- Teachers are vigilant to the relationships between children, and are aware of possible conflicts.
- Teachers are aware of the temperaments of the children.
- Teachers should encourage children to use language to express feelings/emotions.

Where a child does bite, teachers should follow these guidelines and try to distinguish a pattern

- Are there particular times of the day which the child bites?
- Do toys seem to be causing biting incidents?
- Does the child focus on one particular child?
- Is the child teething?
- Can something be offered to soothe the child's biting? For example toys/food with textures or coldness.

Procedures to follow when biting occurs

- The appropriate first aid is administered.
- The child is comforted, and reassured of their safety.
- The teacher will explain to the child who has bitten using a firm but gentle approach that biting is not allowed
- The Principal will be informed and details should be recorded in the accident and incident report book.
- The situation is dealt with professionally, and confidentiality is adhered to. Both parents are informed separately, and the accident and incident report is signed.
- The teacher should explain the methods which will be adhered to so it does not occur again, and highlight the importance of partnership with parents.
- If the child bites again, the child should be observed for a period of time to try and develop a pattern of behaviour.
- In the event of a child repeatedly biting, the Principal will speak to the parent(s)/ guardian. If all avenues have been exhausted, the Principal may suggest seeking help/support outside the setting.

APPENDIX I

CHILDREN AND BEHAVIOUR

Where children cannot verbally communicate, children often use behaviour as a form of communication. Children will often use behaviour as a medium to express their feelings, fears and emotions.

Physical behaviour- children's physical behaviour can often be a result of tiredness, illness or medication. Night-time sleep problems (interrupted night sleep) has been found to be a common cause of behaviour problems causing chronic fatigue and a cranky, irritable child with poor coping skills.

Developmental – behaviour will often reflect the age and stage of development of the child for example temper tantrums. Developmental delay in children's speech, mobility or other areas can lead to a child feeling frustrated and may present in challenging behaviours.

The Teacher should be informed by parents of all concerns regarding developmental delay, as it is through this the child's needs can be fully supported within the setting.

Emotional – learning about feelings and emotions is a process. Often when children's emotions are in disarray, it will primarily affect their behaviour. Such examples include bereavement, a new baby, a house move etc. We ask parents to inform the Teacher of any changes or difficulties which may be occurring for the child- no matter how small. Through this, the child can be supported positively, and feel valued, cared for and respected.

Environmental –An environment which supports the individual child's interests, age and stage of development, gender and background should be provided. The environment must be stimulating, and offer a variety of opportunities for each child within the room. Settings must ensure the correct space requirements are in place as per the Child Care (pre-school) Regulations 2006.

Intellectual – where a child's interests, abilities or background is not evident within a room, the child may not be stimulated. It is the responsibility of the Teacher of that room, to ensure age and stage appropriate materials, opportunities and areas are present within the room for each child to utilize.

Appendix II

Methods to support positive behaviour

Supporting and encouraging positive behaviour requires documenting, planning, and implementation. However, it is based on Teacher becoming reflective in their practice. It is our policy to create, and sustain a setting where children are confident and competent learners in a secure, stimulating and age appropriate environment.

- Children will be offered choice
- Children will have an input to the curriculum
- Children will be included in areas which affect them
- will implement fair and consistent expectations regarding behaviour.
- Teacher's will speak to children
 - Clearly, using language/ a medium which the child understands
 - Appropriate tone
 - Positive body language
- will offer praise and encouragement to all children
- Children will feel valued, empowered, included and confident in the environment
- Follow the behaviour policy (**ABCD**)
- Children will not be labelled, or spoke about in front of the child/other children/ other teachers.
- Sanctions are fair and linked to the behaviour for example picking up litter for dropping it.
- We do not use physical punishment **of any kind**
- We do not use a bold chair/step/corner or any other means to isolating or humiliating the child.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN – INDOOR AND OUTDOOR

Principles

This policy and code of practice has been developed to inform and guide supervision of the children in the Ardtona House School in order to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and development of the Child, Part V, 18 Premises and Facilities) (Siolta Standard 9 Health and Welfare) (National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 19: Equipment and Materials, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

Young children are curious about their environment where they see opportunities for exploration and investigation in their indoor and outdoor environment. Children are especially vulnerable and rely on responsible adults to care and protect them. Teachers at Ardtona House School are in a relationship of special trust – to ensure that no child comes to any harm while in their care.

Policy and Procedure

This Supervision of Children Policy and Procedure must be followed and implemented by all teachers working in the Ardtona House School. Teachers must be vigilant and observant in their supervision to ensure the safety, health and well being of the children at all times. Teachers must be familiar with the environment and any possible hazards.

Indoor Area

The Teacher/child ratios for indoor play will be in compliant with the Pre-school regulations. Teacher/child ratios will be applicable to the age range specified in the Pre-school Regulations. Teachers will be vigilant about supervising children indoors.

Entrance Area

- All teachers must follow the practices in relation to access and egress of parents and children through the main door.
- When people reach the outside door of the Ardtona House School teachers should not allow entry unless they are sure that the person is:
 - A parent
 - An authorised collection person
 - A visitor (teachers should be informed of any expected visitors and given the name and company of the person visiting)
 - Preschool Inspection Team
 - If in doubt, check with the Principal.

Stairs

- Teachers must be constantly vigilant in this area and children must not be allowed on the stairs unaccompanied.

Classroom

- Teachers should ensure that their presence and position in the room allows that all areas of the room are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one teacher, at all times.
- Teachers should observe due care and attention when opening presses ensuring that children are not standing nearby.
- Child safety latches should be used at all times on the presses and the doors as appropriate.
- The blinds on the windows should be used appropriately to ensure that the glare from the sunshine does not have an impact on the children.

Outdoor Play Area

The teacher child/ratios for outdoor play will be in compliant with the Pre-school regulations. A minimum of 2 teachers for every group will be present at any one time. Teachers will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors. The garden time is play time for the children. The adult is there to supervise and lead garden games or play, and ensure that the children are in no danger to themselves or their peers. Teachers should ensure they have a good view of the whole garden. Garden time is an extension of indoor activities therefore sitting should be kept to an absolute minimum.

- Teachers should ensure that their presence and position in the outdoor play area allows that all areas of the outdoor area are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one teacher, at all times.
- The outdoor play area must be checked by a teacher for safety before any children use the outdoor play area (see outdoor play policy)
- Teachers must engage with the children during the outdoor play time. The curriculum should be used outdoors as well as in the children's room.
- Children should not be allowed interfere with the gate in outdoor area
- Teachers must ensure that the gate is closed over and properly secured at all times.

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Outings

- The teacher/child ratios for outings should be confirmed with the Insurance company in the first instance, as this ratio may be higher than the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006
- Teachers should ensure that they follow the requirements of the Outings Policy and Procedure
- Teachers must ensure that they constantly supervise the children in their care.

CHILDCARE HEALTH and SAFETY

ACCIDENTS and INCIDENTS

Principle

Ardtona House School will comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006, are the governing legislation (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child,8 Management and Staffing, Part V, 14 Records, 16 Fire Safety Measures, 18 Premises and Facilities, 27 Safety Measures) (Síolta Standard 2: Environments, Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School it is our policy to promote the health, well being and personal safety of all our children and teachers, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety. Although we adhere to all safety precautions and follow Tusla guidelines, accidents can occur.

Policy and Procedure

Prevention

- A Safety statement is prepared and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Children will be adequately supervised in accordance with the recommended child/adult ratios dictated by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006.
- Each room is designed for easy and unobtrusive supervision by the adults at all times.
- Our teachers know which children are present at any one time.
- We ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected.
- The main door is locked with a door bell for parents to ring.
- Only suitable and age-appropriate materials and equipment are available to children.
- Windows and doors have safety appropriate glass with restricted opening safety devices.
- All electrical sockets are fitted with safety covers.

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- Furniture and equipment is arranged to minimize safety risks.
- Sun block protection will be used during hot weather; parents will be advised to provide a hat that covers the head, neck, ears.

In the event of an accident

- The First Aid box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and location is known to all teachers. Any substances, which may cause an allergy, will not be included.
- Medical supplies are checked regularly.
- A designated First Aider (certified) is on the premises at all times.
- Teachers must wear protective clothing (disposable apron and gloves) to clean any bodily fluids or spillages.
- If a child is involved in an incident or accident, they will be taken into a quiet area, if possible.
- All accidents/incidents even minor ones, are recorded in an accident record book, minor accidents will be treated and parents informed of the injury. Records are accessible to all relevant teachers in case of an emergency. Parents will be asked to sign off on the accident report and will receive a copy.
- In the case of a serious accident, we have a local doctor on call, they will be called and the child's parents contacted immediately or we will call an ambulance.
- If the child has to go to the hospital immediately the Teacher will accompany the child, if the ambulance personnel permit. The child's record will be taken to the hospital.
- The teacher will not sign for any treatment to be carried out on the child in the hospital. The Teacher will wait with the child until the parent/carer arrives.
- All serious accidents will be reported to the Insurance Company.
- Parents are responsible for all doctors or hospital fees where applicable.

Forms

Accident/Incident Form

ANAPHYLAXIS

Anaphylaxis is a sudden and severe allergic reaction, which can be fatal, requiring immediate medical emergency measures be taken.

Principle

Ardtona House School recognises that it has a duty of care to children who are at risk from life-threatening allergic reactions while under Ardtona House School supervision. The responsibility is shared among parents and health care providers. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, Part IV 14 Records) ([Síolta Standard 9: health and Welfare](#), [Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice](#), [Síolta Standard:12 Communication](#)) ([National Standard 12: Health Care](#))

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to minimise the risk to children with severe allergies to potentially life-threatening allergens without depriving the severely allergic child of normal peer interactions or placing unreasonable restrictions on the activities of other children in the school.

This policy is designed to ensure that children at risk are identified, strategies are in place to minimize the potential for accidental exposure, and teachers and key volunteers are trained to Ardtona House School in an emergency situation

Policy

While Ardtona House School cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, the management will take reasonable steps to provide an allergy-safe and allergy-aware environment for a child with life-threatening allergies.

Ardtona House School will implement the following steps:

- A process for identifying an anaphylactic child;
- Keeping a record with information relating to the specific allergies for each identified anaphylactic child to form part of the child's Permanent Child Record;
- A process for establishing an emergency procedure plan, to be reviewed annually, for each identified anaphylactic child to form part of the child's child record;
- Procedures for storage and administering medications, including procedures for obtaining preauthorization for employees to administer medication to an anaphylactic child; and

- All incidents will be recorded and the process reviewed

Anaphylaxis Procedures

Description of Anaphylaxis

Signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction can occur within minutes of exposure to an offending substance. Reactions usually occur within two hours of exposure, but in rare cases can develop hours later. Specific warning signs as well as the severity and intensity of symptoms can vary from person to person and sometimes from reaction to reaction in the same persons.

An anaphylactic reaction can involve **any** of the following symptoms, which may appear alone or in any combination, regardless of the triggering allergen:

- **Skin:** hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash
- **Respiratory (breathing):** wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarse voice, chest pain/tightness, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing
- **Gastrointestinal (stomach):** nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhoea
- **Cardiovascular (heart):** pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/light-headed, shock
- **Other:** anxiety, feeling of “impending doom”, headache, uterine cramps in females

Because of the unpredictability of reactions, early symptoms should never be ignored, especially if the person has suffered an anaphylactic reaction in the past.

It is important to note that anaphylaxis can occur without hives.

If an allergic child expresses any concern that a reaction might be starting, the child should always be taken seriously. When a reaction begins, it is important to respond immediately, following instructions in the child’s *Child Emergency Procedure Plan*. The cause of the reaction can be investigated later.

The following symptoms may lead to death if untreated:

- Breathing difficulties caused by swelling of the airways; and/or
- A drop in blood pressure indicated by dizziness, light-headedness or feeling faint/weak.

Identifying Individuals at Risk

At the time of registration, parents are asked to report on their child's medical conditions, including whether their child has a medical diagnosis of anaphylaxis. Information on a child's life threatening conditions will be recorded and updated on the child's Permanent Child Record annually.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to:

- Inform the Principal when their child is diagnosed as being at risk for anaphylaxis.
- In a timely manner, complete medical forms and the Child Emergency Procedure Plan which includes a photograph, description of the child's allergy, emergency procedures, contact information, and consent to administer medication. The Child Emergency Procedure Plan should be posted in key areas such as in the child's playroom, the office, the feedback notebook etc, Parental permission is required to post or distribute the plan.
- Provide the school with updated medical information at the beginning of each year, and whenever there is a significant change related to their child.

Record Keeping – Monitoring and Reporting

For each identified child, the Principal will keep a Child Emergency Procedure Plan on file. These plans will contain the following information:

- Child-Level Information
 - Name
 - Contact information
 - Diagnosis
 - Symptoms
 - Emergency Response Plan
- School -Level Information
 - Emergency procedures/treatment
- GP section including the child's diagnosis, medication and GP signature.

Emergency Procedure Plans

a) Child Level Emergency Procedure Plan

The Principal must ensure that the parents and child (where appropriate), are provided with an opportunity to meet with designated teachers, prior to the beginning of each year or as soon as possible to develop/update an individual Child Emergency Procedure Plan. The Child Emergency Procedure Plan must be signed by the child's parents and the child's GP. A copy of the plan will be placed in readily accessible, designated areas such as the playroom and office.

The Child Emergency Procedure Plan will include at minimum:

- The diagnosis;

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- The current treatment regime;
- Who within the school is to be informed about the plan – e.g. Teachers, volunteers, playmates;
- Current emergency contact information for the child's parents/guardian;
- A requirement for those exposed to the plan to maintain the confidentiality of the child's personal health information;
- Information regarding the child, is parent's responsibility to advise the school about any change/s in the child's condition; and
- It is the school's responsibility for updating the child's records.

Emergency Plans

Management will consult with parents, teachers and the insurance company to decide on an appropriate emergency plan on a case by case basis to ensure that an appropriate course of action is taken for the child. The following two plans A and B will be used in consultation with parents and then an individual plan will be written up. Parents will be required to sign a declaration that they are happy for teachers to follow the decided emergency plan. In the event of an emergency, designated teachers will follow the plans as decided by parents and management.

Sample Emergency Procedure Plan A

Ardtona House School will use the following emergency procedure:

1. **FIRST Call emergency medical care 999, 112 or 911**
2. Follow the instructions from the emergency services and **only** administer the child's auto-injector or inhaler under their instruction. Note time of administration.
3. Contact the child's parent/guardian.
4. Under the instruction of the emergency services **only** a second auto-injector or inhaler may be administered within 10 to 15 minutes or sooner, after the first dose is given IF symptoms have not improved (i.e. the reaction is continuing, getting worse, or has recurred).
5. If an auto-injector has been administered, the child must be transported to a hospital (the effects of the auto-injector may not last, and the child may have another anaphylactic reaction).

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6. One person stays with the child at all times.

7. One person goes for help or calls for help.

The Principal, or designated teachers, must ensure that emergency plan measures are in place for scenarios where the child is off-site (e.g. bringing additional single dose auto-injectors on outings).

Sample Emergency Procedure Plan B

Ardtona House School will use the following emergency procedure:

1. Administer the child's auto-injector (single dose) at the first sign of a reaction. The use of epinephrine for a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction will not harm a normally healthy child, if epinephrine was not required. Note time of administration.

2. Call emergency medical care 999, 112 or 911

3. Contact the child's parent/guardian.

4. A second auto-injector may be administered within 10 to 15 minutes or sooner, after the first dose is given IF symptoms have not improved (i.e. the reaction is continuing, getting worse, or has recurred).

5. If an auto-injector has been administered, the child must be transported to a hospital (the effects of the auto-injector may not last, and the child may have another anaphylactic reaction).

6. One person stays with the child at all times.

7. One person goes for help or calls for help.

The Principal, or designated teachers, must ensure that emergency plan measures are in place for scenarios where the child is off-site (e.g. bringing additional single dose auto-injectors on outings).

Provision and Storage of Medication

The location(s) of child auto-injectors must be known to all teachers.

Parents will be informed that it is the parents' responsibility:

- To provide the appropriate medication (e.g. single dose epinephrine auto-injectors) for their anaphylactic child;
- To inform the teachers where the anaphylactic child's medication will be kept (i.e. with the child, in the child's playroom, and/or other locations);

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- To inform the teachers when they deem the child competent to carry their own medication(s), and it is their duty to ensure their child understands they must carry their medication on their person at all times;
- To provide a second auto-injector to be stored in a central, accessible, safe but unlocked location;
- To ensure anaphylaxis medications have not expired; and
- To ensure that they replace expired medications.

Allergy Awareness, Prevention and Avoidance Strategies

a) Awareness

The Principal should ensure:

- That all Ardtona House School teachers and persons reasonably expected to have supervisory responsibility of children receive training, in the recognition of a severe allergic reaction and the use of single dose auto-injectors and standard emergency procedure plans.
- That all teachers including substitute employees, employees on call, and volunteers have appropriate information about severe allergies including background information on allergies, anaphylaxis and safety procedures.
- With the consent of the parent, the Principal and the teachers must ensure that the child's playmates are provided with information on severe allergies in a manner that is appropriate for the age and maturity level of the child, and that strategies, to reduce teasing and bullying are incorporated into this information.

Posters which describe signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how to administer a single dose auto-injector should be placed in relevant areas. These areas may include playrooms, office, staff room, lunch room etc.

b) Avoidance/Prevention

Individuals at risk of anaphylaxis must learn to avoid specific triggers. While the key responsibility lies with the child's family the school must participate in creating an "allergy-aware" environment. Special care is taken to avoid exposure to allergy-causing substances. Parents are asked to consult with the Teacher before sending in food to playrooms where there are food-allergic. The risk of accidental exposure to a food allergen can be significantly diminished by means of such measures.

Non-food allergens (e.g. medications, latex) will be identified and restricted from playrooms and common areas where a child with a related allergy may encounter that substance.

Training Strategy

A training session on anaphylaxis and anaphylactic shock will be held for all Ardtona House School teachers.

Efforts shall be made to include the parents, and children (where appropriate), in the training. Experts (e.g. public health nurses, trained occupational health and safety staff) will be consulted in the development of training policies and the implementation of training. Training will be provided by individuals trained to teach anaphylaxis management. The training sessions will include:

- Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis;
- Common allergens;
- Avoidance strategies;
- Emergency protocols;
- Use of single dose epinephrine auto-injectors;
- Identification of at-risk children (as outlined in the individual Child Emergency Procedure Plan);
- Emergency plans; and
- Method of communication with and strategies to educate and raise awareness of parents, children, employees and volunteers about anaphylaxis

Additional Best Practice:

- Distinction between the needs of younger and older anaphylactic children.

Participants will have an opportunity to practice using an auto-injector trainer (i.e. device used for training purposes) and are encouraged to practice with the auto-injector trainers throughout the year, especially if they have a child at risk in their care. Children will learn about anaphylaxis as part of the curriculum

Form

Registration Form

ANIMALS

Principles

To ensure the safety of the children from illness or risk from animals (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Síolta Standard 2: Environments, Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 12: Health Care)

Statement of Intent

It is our policy to ensure that any animals kept at Ardtona House School will be cared for according to their individual requirements and needs.

Visiting animals will be kept under control.

Policy and Procedure

Animals, birds and fish may carry infections, which can be transmitted to humans. Strict hygiene procedures are therefore required when handling and caring for these creatures to prevent illness.

The children are encouraged to talk with adults regarding the animals and their care. The children hands are always washed after handling the animals.

Precautions

- Appropriate risk assessments must be carried out and an account must be taken of any allergies that anyone coming into contact with the animals may have and appropriate precautions taken.
- Parents must be informed before an animal visits Ardtona House School to establish if a child has an allergy or phobia to a particular animal.
- It might be advisable for the children to view the visiting animal from a safe distance, e.g. looking through a window to an animal outside.
- Teachers should be aware that all species of reptiles may carry salmonella organism, particular care with hygiene must be taken when introducing these animals into the school.
- Children must wash their hands thoroughly with liquid soap in warm running water after coming in contact with any animals.
- Children will be supervised at all times when handling animals and will be taught correct handling and care of the animals.
- Teachers must wash their hands after cleaning out the animals and dispose of all soiled matter in the outside bin.

- Children must not help to clean the animals environment

Care of Animals

- Correct guidelines and care of the animals must be followed.
- Information regarding feeding, cleaning, and any other care information should be obtained from reliable sources.
- Suitable secure housing must be provided for the animals.
- Arrangements will be made for care of the animals over the weekend and overnight if necessary.
- Any animals brought into Ardtona House School by visitors are to be their responsibility however teachers are still responsible for assessing any risks and taking any necessary precautions.

Care of Animals that we have at Ardtona House School

Fish:

The Principal will ensure that fish will be fed appropriately and their tank will be cleaned regularly.

Chicks:

The Principal will ensure that chicks are cared for appropriately and children are always supervised around them.

Zoonoses

Domestic and farm animals may carry a range of diseases, some of which can also affect humans. These diseases are known as zoonoses and some of these diseases may pose a risk to persons working with animals

Common Zoonoses

Escherichia coli 0157

Bacterium that lives in the gut of animals, including cattle, sheep, deer and goats and is also carried by pets and wild birds. Can cause illness in humans ranging from diarrhoea to kidney failure and in some cases death. Infection can be caused by contacting contaminated faeces and then introducing the bacterium into the mouth. It is vital that anyone who works with or touches animals thoroughly washes their hands and arms before eating, drinking or smoking and observes good personal hygiene practices.

Cryptosporidiosis

This disease is caused by a protozoa called *Cryptosporidium parvum*. It is carried by calves, lambs, deer and goats and may be transmitted to humans by contact with animal faeces. It may cause diarrhoea and abdominal pain with 'flu-like symptoms for up to six weeks in humans. Again good personal hygiene practices are key to preventing worker exposure.

Salmonella

The salmonella bacterium can be carried by many types of animals and infection in humans can result in diarrhoea, fever and abdominal pains. Human infection is normally due to contact with contaminated faeces and subsequent hand to mouth contact. Once again good personal hygiene practices are essential.

Orf

Orf is caused by a virus carried by sheep and goats (lambs pose a significant risk) and may cause face, hand or arm ulcers in humans who come into contact with lesions on infected animals. Good personal hygiene practices are essential to prevent human infection.

Ovine chlamydiosis (enzootic abortion of ewes - EAE)

EAE is caused by the organism *Chlamydia psittaci* which is carried by sheep and possibly goats. Infection in humans can lead to abortion or flu like illnesses. It is normally passed to humans during handling or contact with an infected afterbirth. Pregnant women should thus avoid working around pregnant ewes.

CAMERA and PHOTOGRAPH USE

Principles

We aim to use photographs and cameras at Ardtona House School for:

- Assessment, planning and recording
- Observation tools
- Information for visitors and parents
- Training purposes
- Language extension
- Teaching and learning resources

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 9 (2) Behaviour Management) (Síolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation, Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records)

Statement of Intent

To protect the privacy and safety of the children in our care

Policy and Procedure

We are aware of the need for sensitivity when taking photographs and observe the following:

- Parental permission will always be sought before photos are taken.
- Only the schools cameras may be used to take pictures. Each teacher has a camera in their own room and are responsible for it.
- Teachers are not allowed to take pictures with picture phones or their own personal cameras. (If this is breached disciplinary action may be necessary)
- The child does not object to having his/her photograph taken.
- Photographs are used to show positive issues (e.g. a piece of work that the child has worked hard on or is pleased with, children playing co operatively together.....)
- We are inclusive so that gender, race, special educational needs, and differing abilities are reflected in a balanced way.
- There may be cultural issues of which we need to be aware when taking photographs of children from different ethnic minority groups.

Where photographs, videos or even samples of children's work are to be displayed outside Ardtona House School we seek parental permission for this to happen. Examples of this are newspaper reports, articles in early year's publications or exhibitions of children's work.

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Students visiting professionals or researchers, who need to take photographs or videos as part of their work, are made aware of the need for confidentiality and that children will not be named or identified in any other way. Further parental permission will be sought in this instance.

Parents are made aware of our use of cameras, and the location of this policy through the parent's handbook, and have the opportunity to voice any concerns.

Use of Photographs

Photographs are used throughout Ardtona House School for a variety of purposes. Generally teachers take photographs of the children throughout the year to capture a particular example of play or something that a child has achieved. In addition we use photographs for:

Photographs	Purpose
Displays of children's work	A record of ideas and topic references
Examples of children's play	As a part of an individual child's profile
Classroom areas	To show the range of activities
Class albums	For children to look at and talk about
Policy folders	To explain the work of the school to parents and visitors
Special events and festivals	As a record of the year and for children and parents to look at and talk about
Birthday display	Used as a class resource for talking about birthdays, months of the year etc
Photographic maps of the school and local environment	A resource for topic work
From home	To act as a link between home and pre-school
Children's own photographs	Children take photographs at Ardtona House School on the digital camera, to gain experience in technology

Videos are also occasionally used in Ardtona House School for many of the above purposes. In particular we may use them for observations of children's play to further our understanding, or for assessment and planning tools

Parents Photographing and Videoing Children

Parents may not take photographs or record children in Ardtona House School without the consent of the Management

Storage of Photos

Photographic or video recording will not be stored on devices in Ardtona House School for extended periods of time.

If a photograph is likely to be used again it will be stored securely and only accessed by those people authorised to do so.

We will not re-use photos more than one year old, without further permission from the subject of the photo or the parent, as applicable.

Disposal of Photographs

In the event that we no longer require a photo it will be disposed of as confidential waste.

When photos are destroyed, the negatives will be destroyed as well if applicable.

Where the image is kept electronically

- The CD disk will be made unusable
- The memory card erased
- The computer file deleted

Form

Registration

CLEANLINESS and HYGIENE

Principle

Ardtona House School will ensure that it complies with all the relevant legislation. To ensure the safety, health and welfare of the children, teachers and parents who are in the school. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, Part IV ,14 records, Part V, 18 Premises and Facilities, 22 Sanitary Accommodation, 24 Waste Storage and Disposal, 25 Equipment and Materials, 26 (2)(b)Food and Drink, 27 (e) Safety Measures) (Síolta Standard 2: Environments) (National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 13: Food and Drink, National Standard 17: Premises)

Statement of Intent

We are committed to excellence in matters of cleanliness and hygiene. We implement good practice and work effectively to ensure Ardtona House School is maintained to a very high standard. All employees are required to follow the cleanliness and hygiene procedures

Policy and Procedure

- Ardtona House School will be maintained in a clean, hygienic state throughout the day and a cleaning record is kept.
- Our teachers are responsible for the materials and equipment used and ensures they are clean, hygienic and safe at all times.
- Children will be encouraged to care for their environment.
- Cleaning routines and procedures are in place and are closely monitored and recorded.
- Disposable cloths will be used for all cleaning purposes. They will be discarded regularly.
- All cutlery/crockery will be washed and left to air dry.
- Hand washing instructions are in place, liquid soap, clean dry towels are only used.
- Hand washing is the most important defence against the spread of infection our children and teachers will be aware of the importance and the need to wash our hands several times a day. Children are encouraged to use the red thermostatically controlled tap to wash their hands.

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- Children will be encouraged to develop their own personal hygiene routine, self-care and independence will be taught.
- Disposal tissues will be available in the children's rooms.
- In the event where there is a spillage (e.g.) blood, vomit, urine (etc) it will be cleaned up very promptly.
- The use of gloves and plastic apron will be worn at all times to minimize the risk of infection.
- We will cover a spillage, use a disinfectant solution and clean it up appropriately.
- All cleaning products are stored safely and out of children's reach.

Children's Rooms

- Checklists are posted on the wall of the room and must be checked daily. All teachers will also receive their own personal weekly rota.
- Teachers are responsible for keeping their rooms clean and tidy.
- All room environments must be clean at all times. Toys, games and work equipment must be placed on the shelves in an orderly fashion at all times.
- During the day the room should be ventilated regularly.

Cleaning Routines for Toys

Toys may be implicated in the transmission of potentially harmful germs and the development of infection in young children. Steps must be taken to ensure toys are maintained in a safe and usable state by regular inspection, scheduled cleaning and appropriate storage.

Soft Toys-should be kept to a minimum because they are porous, support microbial growth and can be difficult to clean. Soft toys must be subject to machine washing (Monthly or more often as necessary) and thorough air drying/tumble drying (according to manufacturer's instructions). Repeated decontamination of soft toys can compromise the integrity of the fabric and create a choking hazard, therefore ensure thorough checking takes place before and after use.

Hard Surface Toys- should be washed at least monthly or sooner if visibly soiled. Toys with moving parts or openings can harbour dirt and germs in the crevices and

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must be washed and scrubbed using soap and warm water/detergent wipes, before thorough rinsing and drying.

Mechanical /Electrical Toys- should be surface wiped monthly or more often as necessary, using a damp cloth that has been rinsed in hot, soapy water or detergent wipes followed by thorough drying.

Books- should be inspected weekly and the surfaces wiped using a disposable cloth that has been rinsed in hot, soapy water/ detergent wipes followed by thorough drying. Books with signs of dampness or mildew must be discarded.

Dressing up Clothes- All clothes must be washable and washed at a temperature of 60 degrees for 10 minutes. Clothes must be laundered weekly or more often as necessary. The storage box or rail must also be cleaned regularly.

Sand Pit- Rake the sandpit every morning and afternoon, keep the sandpit covered when it is not being used. Sieve the sand weekly and wash the sand play toys weekly and allow to dry. Replace sand every 2 or 3 months or more often as necessary.

Toilets

Toilets are checked regularly and cleaned appropriately as necessary.

Bins and Recycling

The room should have two bins; one for green bin recycling and one for everything else. Children will be encouraged to use the appropriate bins. Teachers should ensure that bins are never allowed to overflow. If it is full empty it. The bins should be emptied and rinsed out at the end of every day. If a bin has a lid, the lid must be closed at all times.

Employee Hygiene

It is imperative to wash hands after handling bins, cleaning up vomit or urine, cleaning children's noses, before handling food, after handling food etc. This will help in the battle against infections.

Hand Sanitizers

As most common germs are transmitted through hand contact we have placed hand sanitizers throughout the school for all employees and visitors to use to help reduce the risk of spreading infection.

SAMPLE DAILY CLEANING ROUTINE

- Wipe down all shelves in warm soapy water
- Wash all table tops and wipe down table legs with a mild disinfectant
- Wash down sink and surrounding counter area
- Clean fridge as required, check dates on food, and remove if necessary
- The fridge should be wiped out inside with antibacterial spray
- The outside of the fridge is to be cleaned with a mild disinfectant
- Wipe down window sills in warm soapy water. Clean windows with warm soapy water if necessary
- Wipe all exposed woodwork with a mild disinfectant
- Wash all skirting boards with warm soapy water
- Empty bin and replace bag
- Replace hand towels and hand washing liquid as required
- Clean toilet and disinfect toilet seat and base
- Wash sink and disinfect taps
- Empty bins and replace new bag, clean dry towels and toilet paper
- Sweep/vacuum and wash floors with warm soapy water

Forms

Daily Cleaning Record

Weekly Cleaning Record

Monthly Cleaning Record

DRESS CODE

Principle

Ardtona House School considers the way their teachers dress and their appearance is of significant importance in portraying a professional image to parents, visitors, clients and colleagues and encourages a sense of belonging. (Siolta Standard 11: Professional Practice) (National Standard 5: Organisation and Management)

Scope

All Ardtona House School employees, students and volunteers

Statement of Intent

The Dress Code policy is designed to guide teachers on Ardtona House School standards of dress and appearance. All teachers appearance must be professional at all times both within the workplace and when representing the school. Ardtona House School values its teachers and does not intend to quell personal expression- but the health, safety and welfare of children and teachers is paramount at all times.

Policy

- Clothing and shoes must be clean tidy and neat at all times
- Comfortable shoes should be worn at all times. High-heels, flip flops or backless shoes should be avoided in light of the dangers these can present to teachers and children.
- The absolute minimum of make-up should be worn.
- Any tattoos should not be on view.
- Hair should be clean, washed, neat and tied back at all times.
- Nails should be short and clean at all times. Painted nails are not considered appropriate for a childcare setting as all teachers are basic food handlers and non polished nails reduce the risk of contamination. False or gel nails are not permitted.
- Teachers are required to change into appropriate overalls for food handling.
- Teachers are role models for young children so must exercise a high level of personal care and hygiene at all times.
- Chewing gum is not permitted.

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Students and Volunteers

- Dress must be neat, clean and tidy and it must be non-revealing.
- Any tattoos should not be on view.
- Hair should be clean, washed, neat and tied back at all times.
- Nails should be short and clean at all times. Painted nails are not considered appropriate for a childcare setting.
- Comfortable shoes should be worn at all times. High heels, flip flops or backless shoes should be avoided in light of the dangers these can present to teachers and children.
- Chewing gum is not permitted.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE

Principle

In the unlikely event that Ardtona House School has to close at times other than scheduled in the normal opening hours and dates, the policy will be applied to ensure that all involved in the school have a clear understanding of the procedures which will take place. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 8 Management and Staffing, Part IV, 16 Fire Safety Measures) (Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families, Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 2: Contract, National Standard 5: Organisation and Management)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will endeavour to be open from 8.00 to 5.30 Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year (excluding public holidays) without disruption. Where disruption is unavoidable, all involved in the school will be kept informed and Ardtona House School will reopen at the earliest possible opportunity.

Procedure

An emergency closure will be implemented in the following circumstances:

- When the building is unusable through accidental or malicious damage
- When the building is unusable due to required maintenance work. Where possible Ardtona House School will endeavour to negotiate scheduled work to be carried out during times of closure.
- When an outbreak of illness within Ardtona House School community requires closure in line with the Tusla recommendations.
- When illness levels within the teachers mean it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children as per the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 2006.
- When an emergency occurs during the opening hours which requires the school to close early.
- In the event of any of the above incidents occurring which requires Ardtona House School to close on a given day, The Principal will make contact with the families of Ardtona House School affected for that day in advance where practical. Where this is not practical, a member of the management will remain at

Ardtona House School
Childcare Policies & Procedures

the building until such time as it can be determined that all the affected families have been made aware of the situation.

- Parents will be informed about how they can find out when Ardtona House School will reopen and other information according to the circumstances of the closure. This may include asking them to nominate a preferred contact number/email address, or holding a special meeting to keep parents informed.

Emergency closure after a session has started

- In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started, parents and carers will be informed by telephone that they are required to collect their child as soon as possible.
- If the closure is due to sickness, the children and all teachers who are unaffected will remain on the premises until all children can be collected.
- If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children will be safely evacuated according to the current Fire Drill procedures. Contact information for all the children will be taken out of the building alongside the daily register.
- Once the building is evacuated, the emergency services will be called.
- The children will then be taken to a place of safety until such time as they can all be collected by parents/designated person. Parents will be contacted by the Principal. All teachers will remain with the children during this time.

Form

Accident/Incident

ENVIRONMENTAL CARE and RECYCLING

Principle

Ardtona House School will conduct its activities and operations to reflect best environmental practice in order to control and reduce our direct impacts on the environment.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part V, Waste Storage and Disposal) (Síolta Standard 16: Community Involvement) (National Standard 17: Premises)

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School we aim to:

- Reduce the amount of rubbish we send to landfill;
- Increase the amount of rubbish we recycle
- Reduce our energy usage

Procedure

- We will ensure that every main room in the school is provided with a highly visible and convenient recycling bin. This will be emptied daily into the main recycling bins.
- We will ensure teachers have ready access to recycling bins and are trained to dispose of food packaging appropriately.
- We will purchase recycled office paper and stationery, closing the loop on the paper recycled by the school.
- Lights and taps will be turned off when not in use.
- We will use low energy light bulbs where possible.
- We will encourage the children to be environmentally friendly by providing activities that promote recycling.

FIRE SAFETY

Principle

The following legislation governs fire safety. The Fire Services Act, 1981, the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006 – Section 27, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 ([Child Care \(Pre-school Services\) \(no 2\) Regulations 2006](#) and [Child Care \(Pre-school Services\) \(No 2\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2006](#) Part IV, 16 Fire Safety Measures, Part V Premises and Facilities) ([Part IV, 16 Fire Safety Measures, Part V Premises and Facilities](#)) ([National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 17: Premises, National Standard 18: Facilities, National Standard 20: Safety](#))

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will ensure that they comply with all the relevant legislation. We will also ensure we follow the 'Guide to Fire Safety in the Premises used for Preschool Services' from the Department of the Environment. This is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the children, teachers and parents/guardians who are in the school.

Policy and Procedures

Ardtona House School will ensure that:

- Fire drills will be carried out **monthly**. A record will be kept
- Fire extinguishers and blankets will be stored appropriately, ready for use and in good working order.
- All fire fighting equipment will be serviced annually and a record maintained of the service dates.
- Teachers will be trained on how to use fire fighting equipment. A record of this training will be recorded.
- Smoke detectors will be placed at strategic points in the building and 'hard wired'.
- The smoke detectors will be checked regularly to ensure they are working. A record will be maintained of the dates on which the detectors are checked.
- Materials contained in internal furnishings within the service will be of EU standard (i.e. kite symbol or CE compliant) in relation to fire retardant properties and will be non toxic.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- Heat emitting surfaces will be protected by a fixed guard and/or thermostatically controlled to ensure safe temperatures.
- A system for giving warnings in the event of fire must be provided.
- Escape Route and exit doors should be maintained free from obstruction so that they can be safely and effectively used at all times
- All flammable materials (oils, polish etc) are safely stored outside of the children's areas. Waste is promptly disposed of and, in general, precautions are taken to ensure the prevention of occurrences likely to constitute a fire hazard.
- Daily attendance records are kept.

Fire Drill Policy

Ardtona House School has a fire drill evacuation procedure posted on the wall. All teachers should be familiar with their responsibilities with regards to fire drills and the procedures in case of the fire alarm going off. The fire alarm procedure must be shown to all students, substitutes and relief employees commencing work in the school.

Have a lesson with the children about fire and why fire drills must be practiced. Do mock fire drills with the children.

Fire drills will be practiced on a regular basis, at least once a month. All persons on the premises at the time are expected to participate.

All children and teachers must be signed in and out accordingly onto the attendance record. This record will be used for fire drills.

The main thing to remember is to stay calm and not to panic. The children should be filed out and brought to the fire assembly point where roll call will take place.

A record of the fire drill should be kept on file in the office - how long it took, equipment needed, how you dealt with it, how the children dealt with it etc. If a child in your group was upset this should be noted in his/her individual file.

Fire Drill Procedures

If you discover a fire or one is reported to you:

- Sound the alarm and shout FIRE!

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- On sounding or hearing the alarm, Stop whatever you are doing and leave the building with the children by your designated fire exit route. Using the following routine:
- When the fire bell sounds, the children are asked in a calm manner to form a line without delay.
- Lead by one of the teachers they leave the building by the shortest route.
- The principal takes the role books, checks the premises, cloakrooms and then leaves last.
- Once outside stay outside
- The teachers take a role call immediately.
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings or to put on coats.
- If possible, close doors and windows en-route.
- **Meet at the assembly point, which is in the playground or at the front of the building.**
- Do not re-enter the building until management of the fire brigade – fire safety officer informs you it is safe to do so.
- A roll call will be carried out by management at the assembly point to ensure all persons are accounted for.

General

Employees should follow procedures for operating the fire alarm as outlined in the Health and Safety Statement. All employees should be aware of:

- All escape routes from the premises.
- Method of operation of fire doors.
- The importance of keeping fire doors closed.
- How to isolate power supplies where appropriate.
- The importance of general fire precautions and good housekeeping.

When Dealing With a Fire

Employees should be aware of the location of the fire fighting equipment on the premises and the method of operation of this equipment prior to use in an emergency.

If a person's clothing is on fire, wrap the fire blanket, rug or similar article closely around them and lay them on the ground to prevent flames reaching the head.

If electrical appliances are involved, switch off the power before dealing with the fire.

Shut the doors and, if possible, the windows of the room in which the fire is discovered ensuring the main routes of escape are maintained at all times.

Call the Fire Brigade – The designated person(s) should call 999 and give precise instructions as to the address, including the name of the nearest main road and/or other landmarks

Evacuation – Commence an orderly evacuation of the building. The Principal will check that all the rooms are unoccupied including sleep rooms and bathrooms. Close the doors and windows as each check is completed. The Principal will take the daily attendance sheets and a list of Parents Telephone Numbers to the Assembly Point

Assembly – Assemble Children and teachers at a safe pre-arranged point. A roll call or head count should be carried out, based on the daily attendance sheets held by the Principal. The group should then proceed to a nearby safe house, from which the parents can be contacted.

Staff Report – A member of staff should be on hand when the Fire Brigade arrives to provide any information they require

Attack Fire – You can try to extinguish the fire but only if it is safe to do so, using proper equipment. Otherwise, wait until trained personnel arrive.

The above procedure should be practiced as a Fire Drill at regular intervals to familiarize the children with the procedure without frightening them.

The Designated Fire Safety Person is Margot O'Connor

Forms

Fire Drill Record

Employee Training Record

FIRST AID

Principle

Ardtona House School will ensure that the school is compliant with the relevant legislation, the Safety; Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Childcare (Preschool Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations, 2006 refers. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 6 First Aid, 7 Medical Assistance) (Siolta Standard 9: health and Welfare, Siolta Standard 11: Professional Practice, Siolta Standard:12 Communication) (National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School Management will ensure that it meets the requirements set out in the legislation regarding the number of qualified first aiders in the school.

Policy and Procedure

Ardtona House School will ensure that:

- At least one adult, qualified in giving First Aid, should always be present on site. This qualification should be current.
- All teachers are familiar with simple First Aid procedures, such as mouth to mouth resuscitation, and for staff training to be given on this subject.
- First Aid boxes and a simple First Aid book should be provided and sited in designated areas.
- They should be stored in places which are easily available to all adults, but beyond the reach of children. Contents of the boxes should be checked regularly and replaced as necessary.
- Ardtona House School should have first aid boxes for adults and children. The recommended contents of a first aid box for children as outlined in the Preschool Regulations,2006 is outlined below.
- The First Aid box must not contain any substance, which may cause allergies. However, an accessory box containing sticking plaster and antiseptic lotion for children you know are definitely not allergic to these substances may be kept. In addition cotton wool for cleaning wounds and multi-purpose bowl are recommended.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

The Childcare (Preschool Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations, 2006 state the following criteria are recommended for children's first aid box

Materials			
	1-5 children	6-25 children	25-50 children
Hypoallergenic plasters	12	20	20
Sterile eye pads (bandage attached)	2	2	6
Individually wrapped triangular bandages	2	6	6
Small individually wrapped sterile un medicated wound dressings	1	2	4
Medium individually wrapped, non-stick, sterile, un medicated wound dressings	1	2	4
Individually wrapped antiseptic wipes	8	8	10
Paramedic shears	1	1	1
Latex gloves – non-powdered latex or Nitril gloves (latex-free	1 box	1 box	1 box
Additionally where there is no running water, sterile eye wash	1	2	2

In addition to a First Aid Box you may have a fever scan thermometer and a toughcut scissors.

Where mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in sealed disposable containers should be provided. Each container should hold at least 30ml and should not be re-used once the seal is broken. At least 90ml should be available.

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Eye bath/eye cup/refillable containers should not be used for eye irrigation.

First Aid Officer Duties

- The Named First Aid Officer in the Health and Safety Statement is Margot O'Connor.
- An Accident and Incident report must be filled in and kept in the First Aid file. All reports to be signed by the Principal.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- The First Aid Officer will supervise children who are under observation, as a result of accidents/sickness while on the premises.
- The First Aid Officer will keep an up to date list of contact numbers for parents, doctors and hospitals in an easy accessible place.
- The First Aid Officer will be responsible for re-stocking the First Aid kit at regular intervals, at least once a month.
- Report faulty electrical equipment immediately.
- Daily attendance records are kept.
- All flammable materials are safely stored outside of children's areas.

Carrying out First Aid in Ardtona House School

- Antiseptic creams or wipes are never applied. To prevent an infection occurring, a band aid may be applied. Where this is the case please ensure that the band aid is the correct size. Please note that some children are allergic to band aids/plasters. This will be noted on their General Information Form.
- Always wash hands thoroughly after administering first aid.
- Tissue/cotton wool and water is used for all injuries. Never, ever, use soap on wound.
- Cold compresses are used for minor bumps, kicks, pinches, falls, scratches, where slight swelling and/or bruising may occur.
- Cold compresses are used for major bumps, bites, pinches, falls where swelling and bruising will occur. An ice pack can be found in the freezer compartment of the fridge in the kitchen. Ice packs should be replaced as you use them and when necessary.

First aid should be performed where possible away from other children. Ensure that the children you are leaving are left supervised. If this is not possible then administer first aid on the spot.

All teachers (students, substitutes and auxiliary staff members exempt) should have a valid first aid certificate and should update this when necessary.

The first aid box is located in the preschool classroom and in the bathroom

Ardtona House School
Childcare Policies & Procedures

A list of what should be in the box is printed on the inside of the lid. All items removed from the box must be replaced immediately after use.

Incidents and accidents will occur. By endeavouring to keep them at a minimum we can reduce the amount that occurs. Have a watchful eye. Know what the children in your care are doing at all times. Watch out especially for new children in your group as they are the most vulnerable.

Choking and Strangulation

Food, hard sweets, peanuts and marbles are the most common cause of choking. Blind cords, curtain cords or clothing (e.g. ribbons and belts) are a serious strangulation risk to children

Dealing with a Child Choking (over 1 year)



1. Ask the child: Are you choking? Can you breathe?
2. If the child cannot, breathe, talk or cough, stand or kneel behind the child. Start the Heimlich Manoeuvre by placing the flat thumb side of your fist between the child's navel and the breast bone. Be sure to keep well off the breast bone. Wrap your other hand around your fist and press upwards towards their stomach.
3. Keep doing this until the object pops out and the child starts to breathe again.
4. If the child becomes unresponsive, gently lower them to the floor. Call for help and send someone to dial 999 or 112. Stay on the phone and listen carefully to the advice.
 - You must begin CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation)
 - If during CPR you can see the object, remove it with your fingers but do not place your fingers in the child's mouth if you cannot see the object

Forms

Accident/Incident

Employee Training Record

FOOD HYGIENE

Principle

Food Hygiene is governed by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006 and the European Union Hygiene of Foodstuffs Regulations, 1998 and 2000 in the Preschool. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part V, 26 Food and Drink, 27 (e) Safety Measures) ([Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation](#)) ([National Standard 12: Health Care](#), [National Standard 13: Food and Drink](#), [National Standard 17: Premises](#))

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will comply with the above legislation in the provision of food and food hygiene. Article 26 (2) of the Preschool Regulations stipulate that where food is consumed on the premises by a preschool child, the person carrying on the preschool service shall ensure that there are:

- Adequate and suitable facilities for the storage, of food.
- Adequate and suitable eating utensils, hand washing, wash-up and sterilising facilities are provided.
- All waste and other refuse must be stored hygienically, and disposed of frequently and hygienically and in such a manner as not to cause a nuisance.
- Ardtona House School will follow the food hygiene standards required under the Preschool Regulations throughout the school as 'best practice'.

Policy and Procedure

Those responsible for preparation of food should fully comply with hygiene, storage and waste disposal regulations. A person cooking food must have completed *HACCP training. A number of teachers should have completed food handling training.

Food Hygiene

- Tables used for food and drink should be cleaned before and after use and floors swept where necessary.
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before and after meals.
- All surfaces coming into contact with food should be in good repair and easy to clean. Food areas will be free from contamination, dust, flies etc.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- Adults drinking hot drinks will not be involved in play activities or take hot drinks into the children's rooms. Hot drinks should **not** be taken where children are around.
- All utensils will be kept clean and stored in a dust free place.
- All kitchen equipment is cleaned once a week.
- Cracked or chipped cups will not be used.
- Food is not placed directly onto table surfaces
- Food preparation area will be in a separate room of the school.
- Any food or drink that requires heating should be served immediately and not left standing.
- Dates will be checked on all perishable food. These foods and drinks will be kept refrigerated.
- Food handlers should be aware of the need for personal hygiene, and of the action to be taken if they have an infectious illness.

Food Preparation

- Separate chopping boards should be used for raw, meat fish and vegetables.
- Fruit and vegetables should be washed well.

Kitchen

- No children in the kitchen.
- No items belonging to the children to be kept in the kitchen.
- Matches and sharp instruments must be kept out of sight.
- First Aid box kept in the kitchen/ice pack in the freezer.
- Surfaces kept clean at all times.

Fridge

- Fridge will be cleaned once a week using washing up liquid and hot water and hot soapy water. This is recorded on kitchen cleaning sheet.
- Temperature is taken every day of operation. (Less than 5°C) This temperature is recorded on Temperature Control Chart.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- If the fridge temperature is found to be over 5°C, any dairy produce or meats will be disposed of.
- All use by dates are checked every day and disposed of expired.

Mealtime Practises

- Ensure that teachers and children wash their hands before meals.
- Use disposable gloves when serving the children food including snacks.
- Do not have children sitting at the table for too long before the meals are served.
- **Never** blow on or taste the children's food.
- Help and encourage the children to eat their meals. Do not force or demand that a child eats their food. Use positive encouragement in a relaxed manner.
- Ensure that mealtimes are enjoyable experiences for the children.
- Teach the children table manners and etiquette. Show them how to use cutlery correctly.
- Never let one child eat another child's food to prevent allergies or cross contamination.
- Clean up the eating area after each meal. Clean down the table etc with a clean cloth, using the anti-bacterial spray.
- All dishes and cutlery are sent to the kitchen. Cups/beakers which are kept in the classroom should be washed with washing up liquid and hot water and dried thoroughly.
- Children should wash their hands after eating.

*HACCP stands for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point'. It is an internationally recognised and recommended system of food safety management. It focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. Keeping records is also an important part of HACCP systems.

Forms

Fridge Temperature Record

HAND WASHING

Principle

Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part V, 22 Sanitary Accommodation, 26 (2) (b) Food and Drink, 27 (b) Safety Measures) ([Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare](#)) ([National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 18: Facilities](#))

Statement of Intent

To reduce the spread of infection Ardtona House School by ensuring rigorous hand washing and hygiene procedures

Effective Hand Washing

All employees, students, volunteers, and children Ardtona House School must follow the procedure for hand washing at the following times:

1. Upon arrival for the day or when moving from one class to another
2. Before and after:
 - Eating
 - Handling food
 - Feeding a child
 - Giving medication
 - Playing in water that is used by more than one person
3. After:
 - Using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
 - Handling bodily fluid (mucus, blood, vomit), from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from sores
 - Handling uncooked food, especially raw meat and poultry
 - Handling pets and other animals
 - Playing in sandboxes
 - Playing outside
 - Cleaning or handling the rubbish
 - Lunch and tea breaks

N.B. - Washing hands after eating is especially important for children who eat with their hands, to decrease the amount of saliva (which may contain organisms) on their hands

Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Many studies have shown that unwashed or improperly washed hands are the primary

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

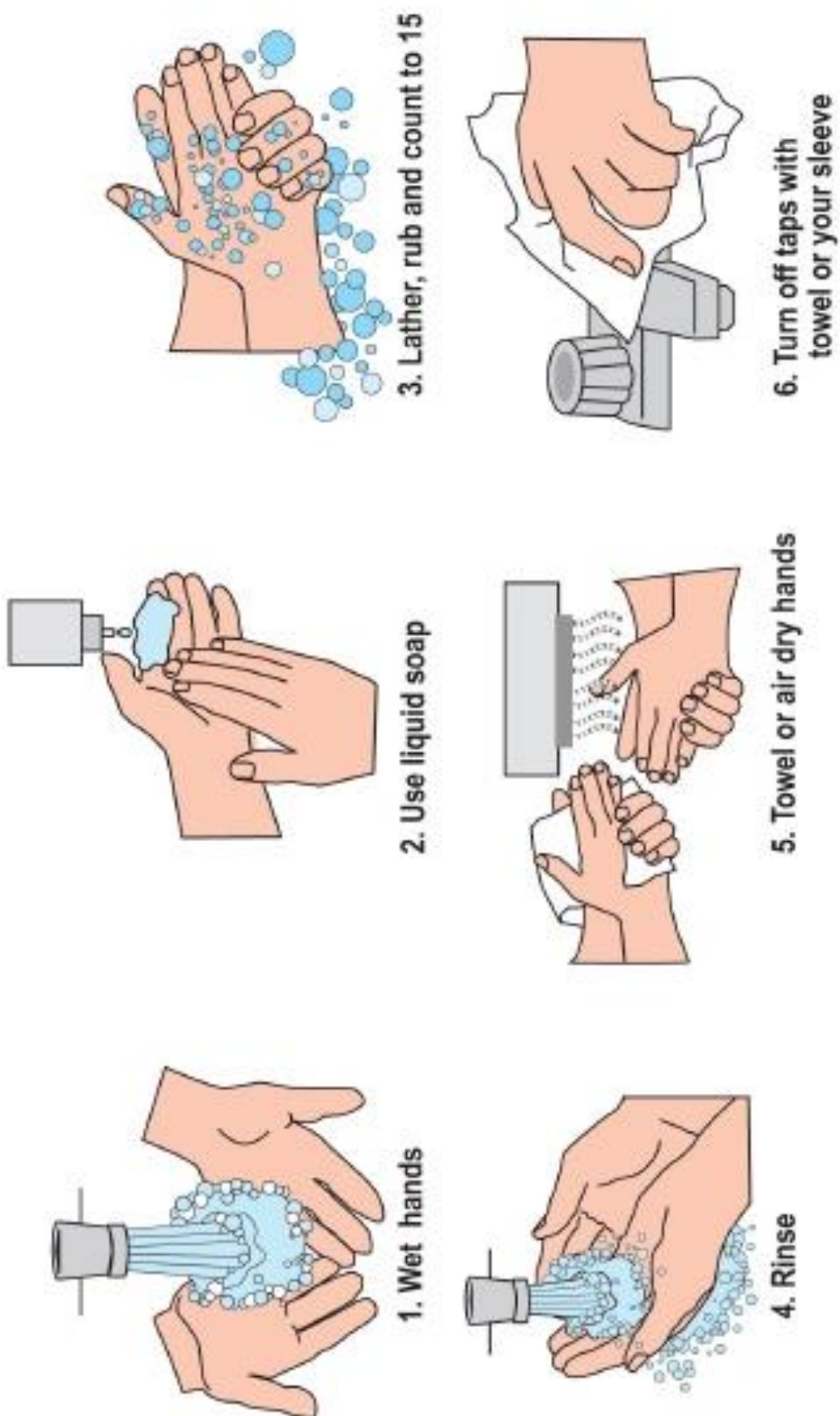
carriers of infections. It must be noted that wearing gloves is NOT protection against bacteria or the H1N1 Virus (Swine Flu).

Children and employees should wash their hands using the following method:

- Check to be sure a clean, dry towel is available.
- Turn on warm water, to a comfortable temperature (in line with pre-school regulations).
- Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap/gel to hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, and continue for at least 15 seconds (to the tune of Row Your Boat) wash, wash, wash your hands that's the thing to do- rub a dub rub a dub thumbs and fingers too) Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands.
- Rinse hands under running water, no less than 15 degrees C and no more than 43 degrees C, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands.
- Dry hands with the clean, dry towel.
- If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper towel.
- Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined bin with a secure lid.
- Hand washing signs will be displayed.

Teachers should provide assistance with hand washing at a sink for children who cannot wash their hands independently.

After assisting the child with hand washing, the employee should wash his or her own hands.



HEALTH and SAFETY

Principle

Ardtona House School will ensure that it takes all reasonable precautions in relation to the health and safety of employees working in the school and children in attendance.

Ardtona House School has a Safety Statement stating the management's written programme for safeguarding safety and health in the workplace. It specifies the manor, organisation and resources necessary for implementing and reviewing safety and health standard, which is signed by all teachers. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 6 First aid, 7 Medical Assistance, 8 Management and Staffing, Part IV, 16 Fire Safety Measures, Part V, 18, Premises and Facilities, 19 Heating, 22 Sanitary Accommodation, 25 Equipment and Materials, 27 Safety Measures, 28 Facilities for Rest and Play) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Siolta standard 15: Legislation and Regulation)(National Standard 17: premises, National Standard 18: Facilities, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School it is our aim to comply with all legislation in force in the area of safety and hygiene including

- Childcare (Preschool Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations, 2006
- Fire Services Act 1981
- Safety; Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Building Regulations 1997 - 2006
- 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.

Responsibilities of Employees

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 organizations Safety, Health and Welfare policy as detailed in the Ardtona House School Safety Statement.
- Observe all safety rules and co-operate with their employers to comply with any of the relevant statutory regulations and directives.

Ardtona House School
Childcare Policies & Procedures

- Use any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience or equipment in such a manner so as to provide the protection intended for securing their Safety, Health and Welfare while at work.
- Conform to all instructions given by the Principal and others responsible 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 Principal.
- Report to the Principal without delay all accidents, damage, defects or issues of safety. This includes accidents or near misses, whether persons are injured or not.
- Ensure that specific statutory training i.e. manual handling and first aid, is completed and updated as required.

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.

Policy and Procedure

Staffing

- It is vitally important the school has the recommended ratio of adults to children on the premises.
- There are at least two teachers with up to date first aid training.
- At least two teachers will be on the premises at all times.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- The arrival and departure of adults must be made clear and kept on record daily.
- Adults must not drink hot beverages in the room with the children.

Supervision of Children

- The arrival and departure of children must be made clear and kept on record daily.
- Appropriate procedures are to be taken to ensure children are always supervised indoors and outdoors.
- Care is taken to ensure children cannot leave the premises undetected.
- Children must be shown and explained the importance of being careful with toys and objects, e.g. How to carry pencils, scissors, and chairs. It is explained that we always sit while eating and never run in the building.

Equipment and Facilities

- In planning out the layout of the room, emphasis is given to minimising safety risks and allowing clear space whilst ensuring that activities are carefully monitored.
- All areas to be checked daily upon arrival into rooms, and routinely during the day.
- External exits to be kept clear and unobstructed at all times. In the classroom keep doorway clear and accessible at all times.
- Check all equipment and work areas to ensure it is safe to use prior to using it. Where a defect of safety concern is identified do not use the equipment until it has been cleared for use by the Management.
- There is a phone in the building at all times.
- All water in the children's wash basins are thermostatically controlled, if you suspect that the water is too hot for the children; please report to this to Management.
- Ensure all sockets not in use have safety finger guards in place.
- All equipment should be turned off every evening on locking up, windows and patio doors secured, and all waste material disposed of.

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Childcare Policies & Procedures

- Toys are to be picked up/tidied away when not in use. All toys with loose pieces or broken removed from use until they are fixed/made safe.
- Special attention must be paid to the outdoor environment.

Cleanliness and Hygiene

- Cleaning and disinfection policies are documented and monitored daily. Reducing cross contamination by using specific cloths (separate cloths for classroom, art/craft, accident and toilet cleaning) and adequate cloth changing must always be implemented.
- A clean as you go policy is in place, floor space in classrooms and walkways must be kept tidy and unobstructed. Storage is provided in each classroom, and must be used to reduce hazards. Food is consumed at tables only and areas are cleaned after meals to remove spillages. All spillages must be cleaned immediately.
- All work rooms in particular toys or child contact surfaces cleaned and disinfected regularly. All body fluids to be cleaned up and area disinfected, cloth used to be disposed of. Disposable gloves to be used. Regularly sanitize hands during the day.

Fire Safety

- Fire exits are not locked and access is kept clear at all times with fire extinguishers close to main exit / access. Fire extinguishers are checked annually.
- A standard fire drill is carried out monthly and records are kept.

Accidents and Incidents

- Any injury must be reported and details of the accident are to be recorded in the accident book or Accident /Incident Form.
- Incidents of violence against teachers, including verbal abuse, will be investigated and appropriate action will be completed by management with the teachers.
- Minor accidents/injuries will be treated on the premises and parents / guardians will be notified of the injury and action taken.
- Ardtona House School has an agreement with a local Doctor in case of accidents or sudden illness. This does not replace dialling 999 in an emergency.

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- First Aid box easily identifiable and located in an area known to all teachers. The contents of the First Aid Box are checked once a month.

Medicines

- Medicine can only be administered to children upon the written consent of their parents, or upon direction from management (after consultation with the child's parents). Please ensure that you have another teacher present with you to verify the medicine administered. Both teachers are to sign the medicine form. This practise is to protect you from dangerous occurrences.
- Medicines should be stored appropriately and safely away from the children

Health and Illness

- All teachers should have up-to-date rubella and tetanus vaccinations as a minimum. Additional checks/vaccinations such as TB, polio or Hepatitis A should be maintained as good practise.
- An exclusion policy applies for all persons suffering from an infectious disease in the school for both teachers and children. Any person suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, infectious cough/upper respiratory tract infection, communicable parasitic infection on hands/arms (scabies etc) shall be excluded from the school until symptoms subside and the person has been medically cleared to return.
- Any person returning to work following an absence which could have health and safety implications (infectious disease, back complaint) must provide Fitness to Work Cert from their doctor.
- No person may work on Ardtona House School behalf while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, as this may affect their personal health and safety or that of any other person.
- Ardtona House School prohibits smoking in all work areas, within the building and on its grounds.
- A worker specific risk assessment shall be completed, when Management is notified of the pregnancy of an employee. Suitable controls shall be introduced in to the workplace to ensure the work completed by the employee in question does not pose a risk of injury or ill health to mother/baby, so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular issues around, lifting/carrying children/furniture/equipment/materials, seating provisions.

Dress Code

- All teachers must wear suitable clothing.

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- All teachers must wear flat suitable shoes.
- Teachers handling food wear appropriate protective clothing.

Manual Handling

- Do not lift if you feel the load is too heavy, 2 person lift is advised.
- If you are moving tables on your own, push tables where possible rather than lifting.

Partnership with Parents

All parents are made aware of the school 's procedures including arrival and departures, parking etc.

Forms

Registration Form

Medicine Administration

Portable Electrical Equipment Check

Equipment Check

Daily Cleaning Record

Weekly Cleaning Record

Monthly Cleaning Record

Pregnant Employee Risk Assessment

HEALTHY EATING

Principles

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states:

“Children have the right to be as healthy as possible, live and play in a safe, healthy, unpolluted environment and benefit from preventive health care and education”.
(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, Part V, 26 Food and Drink) ([Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare](#)) ([National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being](#), [National Standard 13: Food and Drink](#))

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School promotes healthy nutritional choices for our children. We feel it is important at this young age to introduce and educate our children about good nutrition and the health benefits of eating well. . Allergens in food (snacks) we provide will be listed as under Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014)

Policy and Procedures

- Children bring in own healthy Lunch.
- Drinks are available throughout the day, a small snack is available to the pre-school children during the morning work cycle. School children have their snack at 10am
- Allergens are listed on our snack plans under Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014) see appendix for allergens that will be listed.
- Snack time will be enjoyed and socialization and interaction encouraged.
- Children will be encouraged to help tidy up after snack time.
- Children with allergies and special diets will be carefully supervised.
- We do not allow fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, crisps, (nuts or nut spreads may be excluded if a child in the class has a known allergy).
- Cakes, biscuits or sweets may be shared on birthdays or other special occasions.
- Refrigerators will be maintained in a safe hygienic condition and fridge temperature monitored and recorded.

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- Cultural dietary habits are respected. Parents or carers are requested to provide details of foods eaten (and not eaten) by the child.
- Healthy eating is promoted through an assortment of activities for the children including play, stories, music, outings, cookery etc.

Food Labelling and Allergen Information

Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014) stipulates that food allergen information for non-prepacked food must, as a minimum, be provided in written format, but can also be provided verbally at any time.

The allergens in **any** meals, snacks and any food consumed in activities such as baking must be listed and parents made aware of before the food is consumed. There is no requirement under this regulation to list foodstuffs used in creative play such as corn flour for 'gloop', wheat flour for playdough etc as this is not **intended** for consumption (even if the child may eat it!). Each meal or snack must indicate if any of the 14 (required) allergens **are** present. The information provided must include the word "**contains**" followed by the specific allergens, e.g. contains wheat, barley, soya and egg. Precautionary declarations such as "may contain..." or "prepared in a kitchen/premises that uses..." are voluntary declarations and **do not** satisfy the allergen information requirements set out in S.I. No. 489 of 2014 for non-prepacked foods.

Preschool facilities are **required** to provide written food allergen information. However, young children are not in a position to understand or appreciate written food allergen information and therefore, it is necessary that this information is provided to the parent or guardian, particularly when new or altered menu items are made available.

Our weekly/daily snack plans contain the allergen information and that they are displayed in on the parent's notice board and are available to parents.

If parents send in birthday cakes it is preferable that these are shop bought as the packaging will contain allergen information that can be provided to parents. However if parents send in a homemade cake it is the responsibility for the Principal to obtain the allergen information from the parent so that this can be displayed.

Allergens that must be listed (or products of): Gluten, Crustaceans, Eggs, Fish, Peanuts, Soybeans, Milk, Nuts, Celery, Mustard, Sesame Seeds, Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphites, Lupin, Molluscs

For more information www.fsai.ie

Mealtime

- Meal times are used as an opportunity to encourage good social habits.
 - Whenever possible children and adults eat together.
 - Good table manners will be encouraged
 - Children will also be engaged in conversation if they wish
 - Children that are slow eaters will be given time to eat and not rushed
- Children will be encouraged to sit down when eating and/or drinking
- Mealtime should be engaged with in a positive way with the children. Teachers must not use any negative association with food at anytime with the children.

Snacks and Drinks

When snacks are given between meals they are healthy and nutritious and help provide children with the energy and nutrients they need.

Sweets are not routinely offered. Where possible snacks are sugar-free to avoid causing damage to teeth and “sugar rushes”. Fresh fruit is an ideal snack choice. Water is provided for children as a drink between meals.

Fruit juices and squashes should only be given with food to avoid damage to teeth. These drinks should be free from added sugars and artificial sweeteners as far as possible. Fresh juices should be diluted with at least as much water.

Rewards and Special Occasions

Praise and attention are used to help develop children’s self esteem and to act as a positive reward for good behaviour. Food, e.g. sweets, should not be used as reward. If other forms of reward are used, they support and do not conflict healthy eating principles. Celebration of birthdays and other special occasions, e.g. Easter, Chinese New Year etc, focus on the sense of occasion rather than simply the provision of rich, sugary food and drinks.

Parents may send in birthday cakes. The cake should not contain nuts, as some children are allergic to nuts. Parents will be asked to sign if they agree their child can eat a cake supplied by another parent.

Activities

Healthy eating is promoted through an assortment of activities for the children including play, stories, music, outings, cookery etc.

Ardtona House School participates in special campaigns and initiatives where appropriate.

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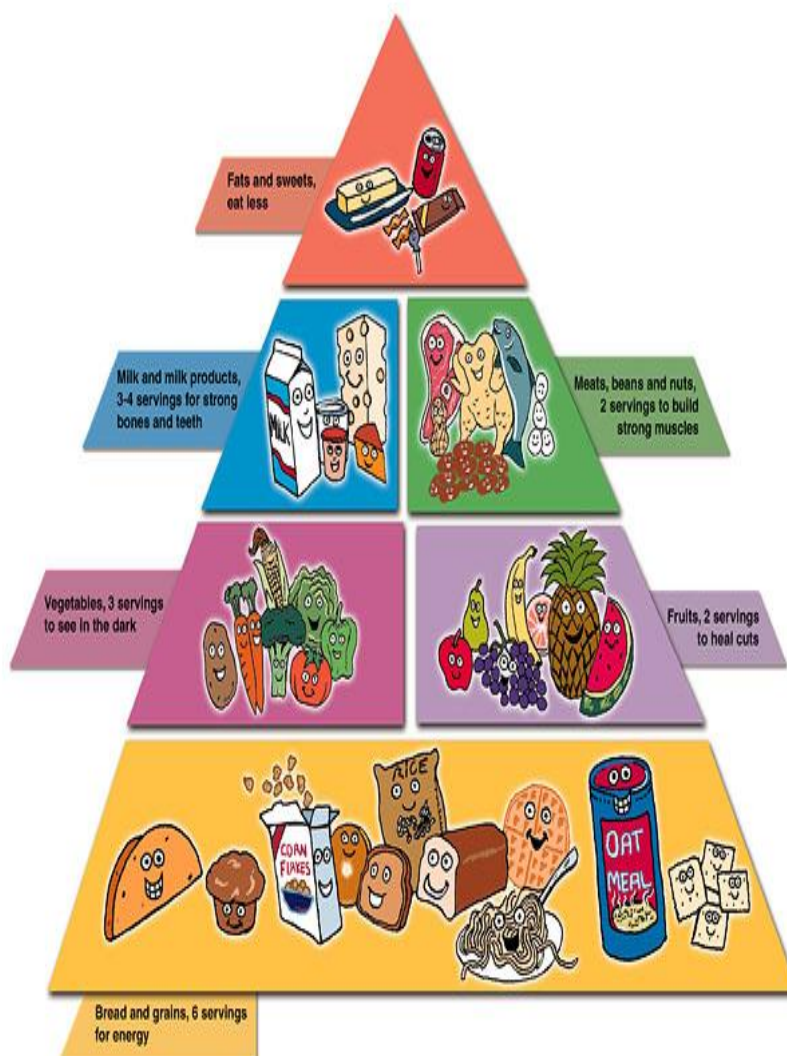
Childcare Policies & Procedures

The implementation of this Healthy Eating Policy will not only relate to the provision of healthy foods and drinks in the school, in order to promote the nutritional and general well being of the children, but it will also address food related activities involving the children which should encourage and enable them to make healthy choices in the future.

Food Pyramid

At Ardtona House School we use the food pyramid as a fun and simple approach to healthy eating. The pyramid is divided into different sections or shelves, each representing a different food group. Children should eat more foods from the bottom 2 shelves and smaller amounts from the rest. A copy of the food pyramid may be found below.

Source: Food Pyramid –
Food Safety Authority



Form

Registration

APPENDIX 1

Food ingredients that must be declared as allergens

Substances or products causing allergies or intolerances as listed in Annex II of Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014)

ALLERGEN	CONTAINED IN (this list is not exhaustive and is meant to be a guide)
Cereals containing gluten	Flour and products made with wheat (such as spelt and khorasan wheat), rye, barley, oats or their hybridised strains, and products thereof, except: (a) 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
Crustaceans and products thereof	lobsters, crabs, shrimp, prawns etc
Eggs and products thereof	Mayonnaise, cakes, biscuits
Fish and products thereof	Fish cakes, fish fingers 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
Peanuts and products thereof	Peanut butter, Arachic oil Arachis, some cakes, biscuits and chocolate
Soybeans and products thereof	Soy sauce, Tofu, soya milk, meat substitute products 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

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	sources
Milk and products thereof (including lactose),	Yogurt, cheese, fromage frais except: a) whey used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin (b) lactitol
Nuts	Cakes, biscuits almonds (<i>Amygdalus communis</i> L.), hazelnuts (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), walnuts (<i>Juglans regia</i>), cashews (<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>), pecan nuts (<i>Carya illinoensis</i> (Wangenh.) K. Koch), Brazil nuts (<i>Bertholletia excelsa</i>), pistachio nuts (<i>Pistacia vera</i>), macadamia or Queensland nuts (<i>Macadamia ternifolia</i>), and products thereof, except for nuts used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin
Celery and products thereof	soups, stews, stocks, bouillons and seasonings.
Mustard and products thereof	Mayonnaise, soups, stews, stocks, bouillons and seasonings.
Sesame seeds and products thereof	cakes, biscuits
Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre in terms of the total SO ₂ which are to be calculated for products as proposed ready for consumption or as reconstituted according to the instructions of the manufacturers.	Bakery goods, soups, jams, canned veg, pickled foods, vinegar, gravies, dried fruit, potato crisps, vegetable juices, sparkling grape juice, beer, wine cider, bottled lemon/lime juice, tea, many sauces (tomato ketchup etc) molasses, fresh and frozen prawns, guacamole, maraschino cherries, dehydrated, pre-cut or peeled potatoes.
Lupin and products thereof	A legume belonging to the same plant family as peanuts used in gluten-free products
Molluscs and products thereof	Shell fish e.g. clams, scallops, oysters, octopus, squid

ILLNESS and EXCLUSIONS

Principle

Ardtona House School has been entrusted by parents to care for their children. Ardtona House School aims to provide as healthy an environment as possible for children and teachers. We will endeavour to minimise your child's exposure to infection by excluding sick children/adults. We will encourage parent's uptake of vaccinations. We will inform parents and the Health Service Executive where necessary of any infections in Ardtona House School. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, 6 First Aid, 7 Medical Assistance, Part IV, 14 Records) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 17: Premises, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

It is the policy at Ardtona House School that our children's welfare is the first and most important consideration. In the event of sudden illness we will contact our parents immediately about our concerns regarding their child's health and well-being.

Policy and Procedure

- Parents will be informed of our concerns and procedures we are taking.
- If a parent cannot be reached the next name on the emergency list will be contacted.
- The child's temperature will be monitored and recorded.
- If the Teacher feels that a child needs medical attention, the parents will be notified and with their permission, we will contact the doctor on call. Parents will be responsible for the doctor's fees.
- If a child requires "one to one" attention and we cannot facilitate this at the time, parents will be asked to collect their child.
- Parents will be required to take their child home immediately in the case of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- We request that parents inform Ardtona House School if their child is unable to attend due to illness, stating details.
- We advise that sick children must be kept at home (see exclusions list).
- Children attending the school suffering from any contagious infections must have a doctor's clearance certificate before returning to Ardtona House School.

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- In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents will be verbally informed. A dated notice informing all parents of any infectious disease outbreak will be displayed on the notice board.
- We advise all persons who enter Ardtona House School to inform the Principal if they have come in contact with an infectious or contagious disease.
- The HSE recommends that all children in pre-school receive the appropriate vaccinations. This acts as a safeguard for your child as well as protecting other children in Ardtona House School.

Exclusion

In order to ensure the safety and health of all our children and teachers those who have any of the following conditions will be excluded from the school:

- Acute symptoms of food poisoning/gastro-enteritis.
- An oral temperature over 37.5 degrees which cannot be reduced
- A deep, hacking cough
- Severe congestion
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing
- An unexplained rash (see exclusion list also)
- Vomiting (48 hours from last episode)
- Diarrhoea (48 hours from last episode)
- Lice or nits - see Head Lice Policy and Procedure
- An infectious /contagious condition
- A child who is on an antibiotic for less than 48 hours
- A child that complains of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms

Infectious Disease Control

- Children/adults with infectious diseases should not attend the school.

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- Employees suffering from a contagious illness should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Principal immediately.
- All children must provide up to date record of immunisations (see immunisation programme).
- Should there be an outbreak of any infectious disease or incident, a dated notice clearly stating the situation must be posted on the Parents Notice Board. Parents should also be informed verbally and in writing. This notice should be updated when relevant.
- Any children of teachers who are ill should not accompany their parents to work in the school.
- Head lice are a contagious condition and if a case is noticed it should be brought to the attention of Parents immediately. A child is not permitted to attend the school until the condition has been successfully treated.
- Observation of children following immunisation is essential, parents should inform teachers of immunisation. It is good practice to encourage two-way communication on all health issues.
- Teachers in the school will be immunised against infectious diseases.

Head Lice Policy

Head lice can be a common problem in pre-school children. Head lice crawl and require head to head contact for transmission. It is our policy to be proactive and manage the treatment. Parents have a responsibility to adhere to all our recommendations, working together to address this common health concern.

- Parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.
- Parents must check their child's head regularly, even if they don't suspect their child has head lice.
- All cases must be reported to the Teacher. Parents must state when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- Parents will be informed and advised on the correct procedures to take.
- Notification will be displayed in the parents notice and information given if required.

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- Confidentiality will be adhered to in every case reported.
- Children will not be accepted into the school with untreated head lice.
- We suggest children with long hair should have it tied back.
- There are a variety of effective preparations, shampoos and lotions available. It is vital that parents follow instructions accurately.

It is important to remember that anyone can get head lice, however infestation is more likely among small children due to nature of how they play. Head lice do not reflect standards of hygiene either in the home or school environment

Meningitis and Meningococcal

Both these diseases are most common in children, there are over 150 cases reported per year in this age group in Ireland (Meningitis Trust). Although relatively rare, the speed at which children become ill, and the dramatic and sometimes devastating course of events make it a terrifying disease. Having a good knowledge and understanding of meningitis and being able to recognise the signs and symptoms early as well as getting medical attention quickly, may save lives. Although cases can occur throughout the year, the majority of cases occur during the winter months.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord.

The most common germs that cause meningitis are viruses and bacteria.

Viral Meningitis is rarely life threatening, although it can make people very unwell. Most people make a full recovery, but sufferers can be left with after effects such as headaches, tiredness and memory loss.

Bacterial Meningitis can be life threatening and needs urgent medical attention. Most people who suffer from bacterial meningitis recover but many can be left with a variety of after effects and one in ten will die.

Signs and Symptoms

Meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning) are not always easy to recognise, and symptoms can appear in any order. Some may not appear at all. In the early stages, the signs and symptoms can be similar to many other more common illnesses, for example flu.

Trust your instincts. If you suspect meningitis or septicaemia, get medical help immediately.

Early symptoms can include fever, headache, nausea (feeling sick), vomiting (being

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sick), and muscle pain, with cold hands and feet, sensitivity to light, stiff neck.

A rash that does not fade under pressure (see 'The Glass (tumbler) Test' below) is a sign of meningococcal septicaemia. This rash may begin as a few small spots anywhere on the body and can spread quickly to look like fresh bruises.

The spots or rash are caused by blood leaking into the tissues under the skin. They are more difficult to see on darker skin, so look on paler areas of the skin and under the eyelids. The spots or rash may fade at first, so keep checking.

However, if someone is ill or is obviously getting worse, do not wait for spots or a rash to appear. They may appear late or may not appear at all

Babies and Toddlers		Children and Adults	
Meningitis and Septicaemia often occur Together 		Meningitis and Septicaemia often occur Together 	
 Fever, cold hands & feet	 Floppy, listless, unresponsive	 Fever, cold hands & feet	 Stomach cramps & diarrhoea
 Refusing food	 Drowsy, difficult to wake	 Vomiting	 Spots/Rash see Glass Test
 Vomiting	 Spots/Rash see Glass Test	 Drowsy, difficult to wake	 Severe headache
 Pale, blotchy skin	 Rapid breathing or grunting	 Confusion & irritability	 Stiff neck
 Fretful, dislike being handled	 Unusual cry, moaning	 Severe muscle pain	 Dislike bright lights



Spots or a rash will still be seen when the side of a clear drinking glass is pressed firmly against the skin.

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A fever, together with spots or a rash that do not fade under pressure, is a medical emergency.

Trust your instincts. If you suspect meningitis or septicaemia, get medical help immediately.

Procedure for Managing a Suspected Case of Meningitis

- If a teacher suspects that a child is displaying the signs and symptoms of meningitis the child's doctor or our doctor on call will be contacted immediately and the child's parents called.
- If a GP is not available the child will be taken straight to the nearest A and E department. A teacher will escort the child to hospital if the parent is unavailable.

Procedure when a case of Meningococcal Disease (Meningitis and /or Septicaemia) Occurs within an Early Years Service

- The public health team will usually issue a letter to other parents to inform them of the situation. The aim of this letter is to give information about, reduce anxiety and prevent uninformed rumours.
- Meningitis literature (out-lining signs and symptoms) will be provided for parents by the public health team. The Meningitis Trust can provide further information and support free of charge.
- Antibiotics will be offered to persons considered to be 'close contacts'. These are usually immediate family members or 'household' contacts. Antibiotics are given to kill off the bacteria that may be carried in the back of the nose and throat: this reduces the risk of passing the bacteria on to others. In certain situations a vaccine may also be offered. These actions are coordinated by the public health team.
- There is **no reason** to close the school.
- There is **no need** to disinfect or destroy any equipment or toys that the child has touched.

The likelihood of a second case of meningococcal disease is extremely small. However, if two or more suspected cases occur within four weeks in the same childcare facility, then antibiotics may be offered to all children and teachers, on the advice from the public health doctor. During this time teachers and parents should remain vigilant. Parents are advised to contact their GP if they are concerned or worried that their child is unwell.

For more information www.meningitis-trust.ie or 24 hour helpline 1800 523196

Hand, Foot and Mouth

Hand, Foot and Mouth (HFMD) is a viral illness that causes fever, painful blisters in the throat and mouth, and sometimes on the hands, feet and bottom. HFMD is often confused with foot-and-mouth (also called hoof-and-mouth) disease, a disease of cattle, sheep, and swine; however, the two diseases are not related—they are caused by different viruses. Humans do not get the animal disease, and animals do not get the human disease.

The viruses that cause it are called Coxsackie viruses that live in the human digestive tract. Several types of this family of viruses can cause Hand, Foot and Mouth so unfortunately you can get it more than once. These viruses are usually passed from person to person through unwashed hands and via surfaces which have viruses on them. They can also be spread by coughing. It is more common to catch them from someone when they are in the early stages of their illness. Although anyone is at risk of becoming infected, children are generally more susceptible. HFMD is more common in summer and autumn and there is no immunisation.

Symptoms

- The disease usually begins with a fever, poor appetite, malaise (feeling vaguely unwell), and often with a sore throat.
- One or 2 days after fever onset, painful sores usually develop in the mouth. They begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers. The sores are usually located on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks.
- A non-itchy skin rash develops over 1–2 days. The rash has flat or raised red spots, sometimes with blisters. The rash is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; it may also appear on the buttocks and/or genitalia.
- A person with HFMD may have only the rash or only the mouth sores.

How Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease Is Spread

- Infection is spread from person to person by direct contact with infectious virus. Infectious virus is found in the nose and throat secretions, saliva, blister fluid, and stool of infected persons. The virus is most often spread by persons with unwashed, virus-contaminated hands and by contact with virus-contaminated surfaces.
- Infected persons are most contagious during the first week of the illness.
- The viruses that cause HFMD can remain in the body for weeks after a patient's symptoms have gone away. This means that the infected person can still pass the infection to other people even though he/she appears well. Also, some persons who are infected and excreting the virus, including most adults, may have no symptoms.

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- HFMD is not transmitted to or from pets or other animals.

Treatment of HFMD

There is no specific treatment and antibiotics are not effective as it is a viral infection. Most children with HFMD recover completely after a few days resting at home. Plenty of fluids help. Any fever or discomfort can be helped with a children's pain relief such as Calpol.

Prevention of HFMD

A specific preventive for HFMD is not available, but the risk of infection can be lowered by following good hygiene practices.

- Hand washing is the mainstay of prevention of transmission and control of outbreaks. Children and carers should wash their hands before eating or preparing food, after using the toilet or especially after contact with an ill child, after contact with animals and whenever hands are visibly soiled. (see Hand Washing and Infection control policies)
- Cleaning dirty surfaces and soiled items, including toys, first with soap and water and then disinfecting them by cleansing with a solution of chlorine bleach (made by adding 1 part of bleach to 4 parts water)
- Avoiding close contact (kissing, hugging, sharing eating utensils or cups, etc.) with persons with HFMD
- **Children should be kept away from the school whilst unwell. If evidence exists of transmission within the school, exclusion of children until the spots have gone from their hands may be necessary.**

Note HFMD is communicable immediately before and during the acute stage of the illness, and perhaps longer as the virus may be present in the faeces for weeks. The incubation period is 3 to 6 days and the condition may last from 7 to 10 days.

MINIMUM PERIODS OF EXCLUSION FROM THE SCHOOL FOR ILLNESS and COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.

Antibiotics Prescribed:	First 2 days at home
Conjunctivitis:	Kept at home for two days; thereafter until eyes are no longer weeping.
Diarrhoea:	48 hours from last episode.
Chickenpox:	7 days from appearance of the rash.
Gastroenteritis, Food poisoning, Salmonellas and Dysentery.	Until authorised by GP
Hand, Foot and Mouth	Until child well/seek principals advice
Infective hepatitis:	7 days from onset of jaundice.
Measles:	7 days from appearance of the rash
Meningococcal Infection	Until recovered from illness
Mumps:	Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling.
Pertussis (Whooping cough)	21 days from the onset of paroxysmal cough or 5 days from the commencement of antibiotics
Poliomyelitis	Until declared free from infection by GP
Rubella (German measles)	7 days from appearance of the rash
Scarlet fever	Child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment
Streptococcal infection of the throat.	3 days from the start of treatment
Impetigo:	Until the skin is healed
Pediculosis (lice)	Until appropriate treatment has been given
Temperature	Over 37.5 degrees
Vomiting	48 hours from last episode of vomiting

The above list is not exhaustive and there are other symptoms that children may have where the school may require the child to remain at home until the condition has been treated. Some of the following may fall into that category:

- Earache
- Deep persistent coughing
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing
- Complaints of stiff neck and headache
- Head Lice

INFECTION CONTROL

Principles

We aim to promote and maintain the health of children and teachers through the control of infectious illnesses. We aim to control infection by providing on- going infection control training for teachers (see also Hand-washing, Toileting, Food Hygiene, Cleanliness and Hygiene, Spillages and Hazards, Swine Flu, Illness Policies). (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part IV, 14 Records, Part V, 18 Premises and Facilities, 22 Sanitary Accommodation, 27 Safety Measures) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 18: Facilities)

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School it is our aim to minimise the spread of infection for teachers and children through the implementation of controls which reduce the transmission and spread of germs. We aim to promote and maintain the health of children and teachers through the control of infectious illnesses.

Policy and Procedure

- Exclusion guidelines as recommended by the Preschool Environmental Health Officer apply in the case of all suspected infectious conditions. These guidelines are contained in our policies and procedures and displayed in the school.
- Parents will be informed should teachers, children or visitors to the school report the presence of any contagious condition to the Principal.

Any child or adult with symptoms of an infectious illness will be asked not to attend Ardtona House School until they are no longer infectious. The management of Ardtona House School will ensure all areas of the premises are thoroughly disinfected, including play areas, toilets, toys and all equipment.

Infectious illness can cause significant ill health among young children and can be transmitted by direct or indirect contact including:

- Contact with infected people or animals.
- By infecting oneself with the body's own germs.
- By hand to mouth transmission.
- By the air / by insects, pests, animals.
- Indirect transmission e.g. toys, door handles, toilets, floors, tabletops etc.

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- By direct – person to person.

Reporting /Recording of Illness

- Teachers and parents must report any infectious illness or similar to the Principal.
- Unwell children will be excluded from the school until the appropriate exclusion period for that illness is finished. (See Illness Policy).
- All teachers are aware of the procedures for dealing with appropriate daily and weekly cleaning routines and bodily fluid spillages. All cleaning is checked by management.

A contingency plan is in place should an outbreak of an infectious disease occur. All the teachers' roles and responsibilities regarding reporting procedures are clearly defined.

- The Principal will report an outbreak of any infectious disease to the Tusla Preschool Environmental Health Officer and the Public Health Department.
- The Principal will record all details of illness reported to them by teachers or reported by parents of a child attending Ardtona House School. These details will include the name, symptoms, dates and duration of illness.

Exclusion from the School:

- Children will be excluded from Ardtona House School based on the time frames outlined in the exclusion criteria (see Illness Policy).
- Children and teachers should remain at home if they are suffering from general diarrhoea or vomiting until 48 hours after being symptom free.

Hand Hygiene:

- Hand washing facilities are always available for children and include hot (not exceeding 43 degrees) and cold water, liquid soap and clean dry towels.
- Hand washing facilities are available in all toilets and the kitchen.
- Children are encouraged and reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after playing outside. See Hand Washing Policy.
- We also occasionally use anti bacterial alcohol gel.

Teachers must wash their hands:

- Before preparing or serving food.

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- Before eating or drinking.
- After going to the toilet.
- After assisting children at the toilet.
- After dealing with any body fluids.
- After cleaning procedures
- After caring for sick children
- After handling soiled clothing or items
- After dealing with waste
- After removing disposable gloves and/or aprons
- After tea and lunch breaks
- After smoking

Hand Washing Technique

Wet hands under hot water (not exceeding 43⁰C for children to prevent scalding), apply liquid soap, rub vigorously paying particular attention to palms, backs, wrists, fingernails and fingers and rubbing between each finger and around the thumbs, rinse, dry thoroughly using a clean dry towel and turn off taps using the towel. (See Hand Washing Policy)

Toilets Toilet areas, including toilet handles, doors, toilet seats and wash hand basins are cleaned frequently throughout the day in accordance with the cleaning schedule and immediately if soiled.

Bodily Fluid Spillage

- Spills of blood, vomit, urine or excreta will be cleaned up as quickly as possible. The area will be sectioned off if possible until the spill has been dealt with.
- Disposable plastic gloves are worn when cleaning up any bodily fluid spillage. Paper towels are used to clean up spillages and placed directly into a plastic bag for disposal.
- Ordinary household bleach freshly diluted (1 to 10 parts water), is used for cleaning and disinfections of bodily fluid spillages. (This solution should not make

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contact with skin. If accidental contact does occur, the skin, eyes or mouth should be flushed with cold water.

- If possible and safe to do so, diluted bleach will be poured directly over the spill; it will then be covered and mopped up.
- Any paper towels and gloves are disposed of in a plastic bag and sealed.
- A supply of bleach and plastic bags is kept together in a secure place in each room in case of such an incident.

(See Spillages and Hazards)

Food and Kitchen Hygiene

- Teachers involved in toileting children are not involved in food handling.

Cleaning

- All areas are cleaned regularly in accordance with a documented cleaning policy and rota. Toilets and hard contact surfaces (playroom tables) are cleaned frequently.
- All cleaning equipment is kept separate to each area and easily distinguished e.g. colour coded.
- Classroom tables are cleaned before being used for meal and snack times.

Toys and Equipment

- Toys and equipment will be cleaned according to the toy cleaning programme and schedule.
- Toys and equipment will be cleaned with hot water and detergent and disinfectant.

Laundry

- Cleaning cloths used in the classrooms, kitchen and sanitary accommodation are washed separately.

Animals

- Children must wash their hands after playing with any animals.
- The play area is inspected before use daily and cleaned of any pet droppings or soil.

Outings to Farms or Zoos

- Children will wash and dry their hands after contact with animals, animals cages as well as before eating and when leaving the farm/zoo.
- All meal breaks will be taken in designated areas away from where the animal's kept.
- Children will be constantly supervised during their visit to the farm or zoo. The importance of hand washing will be reiterated to the children by teachers throughout the visit.

Controlling Infection

The purpose of employing infection control procedures is to reduce the number of germs to a level where there is no longer a threat to public health.

This is done by on-going infection control training for teachers i.e. – importance of hand washing, food hygiene, cleaning routines etc. thus ensuring hygiene is applied correctly and the risk of infection is minimised.

In the event of an outbreak of an infectious illness management will contact the Health Service Executive –Pre-school Environmental Health Officer and or the Public Health Department.

Forms

Daily Cleaning Record

Weekly Cleaning Record

Monthly Cleaning Record

INTIMATE and PERSONAL CARE

Principle

Ardtona House School believes that the intimate care of children cannot be separated from other aspects of their learning and development. We do not discriminate against children who have not reached a stage where they can manage their own personal hygiene and as such welcome all children to participate in the school and provide appropriate support for each on an individual basis. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, Part II Health, Welfare and Development of the Child, 9 (2) Behaviour Management) (Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice) (National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 12: Health Care)

Statement of intent

- To safeguard the rights and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- To assure parents and carers that teachers are knowledgeable about personal care and that their individual concerns are taken into account.

Definitions

‘Intimate Care’ can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, bodily products and personal hygiene, which demand direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, the sexual parts of the body.

‘Personal Care’ generally carries more positive perceptions than intimate care. Although it may often involve touching another person, the nature of this touching is more socially acceptable, as it is less intimate and usually has the function of helping with personal presentation and hence is regarded as social functioning.

These tasks do not invade conventional personal, private or social space to the same extent as intimate care and are certainly more valued as they can lead to positive social outcomes for people.

Children may require help with dressing and toileting.

Procedure

- Teachers will work with parents and children to establish a preferred procedure for supporting the children in our care with their personal and intimate care.
- Where possible the child’s teacher or classroom assistant is responsible for undertaking the care of an individual child. When this is not possible a teacher who is known to the child will take on that responsibility.

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- Children are always asked by the teachers caring for them, for permission to assist them, and children who want to perform their own care are encouraged to do so with adult support when appropriate.
- Children will be cared for with dignity and respect for their privacy.

MANUAL HANDLING

Principle

To assess and reduce the risks associated with manual handling. Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 8 Management and Staffing) (Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice) (National Standard 19: Equipment and Materials, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

Ardtona House School will assess and reduce the risks associated with manual handling. The main area of the body affected by handling accidents is the back, but virtually any part of the body can suffer injury due to poor manual handling.

It is important to remember that health, safety and welfare is the responsibility of everybody in Ardtona House School not just the management.

Ardtona House School Duties:

- Assess risks to the health and safety of their employees and others who may be affected in order to identify the measures needed to comply with relevant Health and safety law.
- Make arrangements to implement the measures identified as being required by the risk assessment.
- Appoint competent people to help with implementation.
- Provide information to employees that can be understood, as well as adequate training and instruction.
- Set up emergency procedures.
- Teachers should complete Manual handling training.
- Avoid hazardous Manual Handling operations as far as is reasonable practicable
- Make suitable and sufficient assessment of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided.
- Reduce the risk of injury from those operations so far as is reasonably practicable

Employee Duties: -

- Report dangerous situations and any shortcomings in their employers' health and safety arrangements.

- Take reasonable care not to endanger themselves or anybody else.

Principles of Safer Handling

The simple steps below are not a guaranteed way of protecting you from manual handling injury. By following the steps below you are reducing the possibility of an accident and the injury that could result from it.

The basic principles are: -

- Avoid manual handling whenever possible.
- Use equipment (*if available*)
- Assess the task (*consider use of equipment or breaking it down into easy stages*)
- Assess the load (*try a test lift*)
- Know your own limitations and don't be afraid to ask for assistance if required.
- Prepare the area, remember that whatever you pick up must be put down at some point (*and vice versa*)
- Position yourself correctly
- Perform the task applying safer lifting techniques
- Evaluate the task (*how could it be made easier next time?*)

The key message when performing manual handling is

THINK before you do it.

Performing a Safer Lift

When performing the task there are accepted practices that should be used to make any handling task safer. They are:

- Think before handling/lifting
- Keep the load close to the waist
- Adopt a stable position
- Ensure a good hold on the load
- Moderate flexion (slight bending) of the back, hips and knees at the start of the lift.
- Don't flex the back any further while lifting.

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- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially while the back is bent
- Keep the head up when handling
- Move smoothly
- Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.
- Put down, then adjust

Remember the risk of injury is greatly reduced if the object being moved is picked up or put down at waist height.

MEDICINES

Principles

Our aim at Ardtona House School is to promote the health, safety and well being of each child in our care. At Ardtona House School we encourage open communication with our parents to share their concerns regarding their child's health (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 7 Medical Assistance) (Síolta Standard 10: Organisation) (National Standard 2: Contract, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 12: Health Care)

Statement of Intent

We do not routinely administer 'Calpol' or other non prescription/prescription medications. We only administer medicines with the correct signed permission.

Medicines must only be brought into Ardtona House School for administration by the teachers when it is essential. This means where it would be detrimental to the child's health if it were not to be administered.

Policy and Procedure

- The Principal and teacher must be informed if your child is taking antibiotics.
- We advise that children must be taking antibiotics for two days prior to returning to the school.
- Essential medicines will only be administered where a parent/guardian have signed a consent form and at the discretion of the Principal.
- We will only follow the dosage as instructed by the doctor.
- If the administration of prescribed medication requires medical knowledge, individual training is provided for the relevant teacher by a health professional.
- No child may self-administer. Where children are capable of understanding when they need medication, for example with asthma, they should be encouraged to tell their Teacher what they need. However, this does not replace the teachers vigilance in knowing and responding when a child requires medication.
- If a child refuses to take their medication teachers will not force them to do so.
- Parents must keep Ardtona House School up to date on their child's medical needs.

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- Parents must fill in the medicine consent form of Ardtona House School, authorizing the administration of medicine to their child. Teachers cannot give medicine unless this written permission is given.
- Parents must hand teachers the medicine, which is then stored in the fridge or the medicine cabinet. Any form of medication must never be left in a child's bag, including inhalers.
- Medicines must be in their original packaging clearly labelled with the child's name, the current date, expiry date, storage instructions and dosage plus the name of the health care provider that recommended the medication.

Storage of Medicines

- All medication is stored out of reach of the children.
- The teacher is responsible for ensuring medicine is handed back at the end of the day to the parent.
- For some conditions, medication may be kept in the school. The Principal will check that any medication held to administer on an as and when required basis, or on a regular basis, is in date and return any out-of-date medication back to the parent.
- Unused medicines should be returned to the parent.

Procedures for teachers administering essential medicines/record keeping

1. Wash hands thoroughly.

2. Teachers administering medicines must check:

- The child's name.
- Prescribed dose.
- Expiry date of medicine.
- Written instructions provided by the prescriber on the label or original container.
- Time last dose was given.
- Check parents have completed and signed 'Administration of Medicines' Consent form and Anti Febrile Medication form if relevant.

3. Ask for another teacher to be present. Ask them to confirm steps 1 and 2 and that the medicine can be administered.

- Teachers **MUST** have a witness **PRESENT** to the medicine being administered.
- Teachers must record the date, time and dosage in the medicines record book and give a copy to the parent.
- Parents will be required to sign to say they were informed of the dosage of the medicine upon collection of the child.

It is extremely important that teachers follow the procedures as detailed above. These measures are in place to ensure that no mistakes are made. Administering medication is a responsibility which must be undertaken with due caution. If teachers are not sure how to administer it or have difficulty doing so, please inform the Principal.

NOTE Students or volunteers may not administer medicines

Procedures for Children with Allergies Requiring Treatment

Oral Medication

- Asthma inhalers are regarded as "oral medication" Oral medications must be prescribed by a GP and have the manufacturer's instructions clearly written on them.
- The Principal must be provided with clear written instructions on how to administer such medication.
- Ardtona House School must have the parents' or guardians' prior written consent. This consent must be kept on file.

Life Saving Medication and Invasive Treatments

Adrenaline injections (Epipens) for anaphylactic shock reactions (caused by allergies to nuts, eggs etc) or invasive treatments such as rectal administration of Diazepam (for epilepsy).

The Principal must have:

- A letter from the child's GP/consultant stating the child's condition and what medication if any is to be administered;
- Written consent from the parent or guardian allowing teachers to administer medication; and

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- Proof of training in the administration of such medication by the child's GP, a district nurse, children's nurse specialist or a community paediatric nurse.
- A copy of such proof may be required by our insurance provider for appraisal so that our insurance can be extended if necessary.

Managing medicines on trips and outings

If children are going on outings, teachers accompanying the children must include the key person for the child with a risk assessment, or another teacher who is fully informed about the child's needs and/or medication.

- Medication for a child is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name and the name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form and a card to record when it has been given, with the details as given above.
- On returning to the school the card is stapled to the medicine record book and the parent signs it.

All records kept by the school are kept secure and confidential

Forms

Registration Form

Medicine Administration

MISSING CHILD

Principle

To minimise the likelihood of children going missing while in the care of Ardtona House School and to provide the correct procedure to follow should that happen. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part V, 27 (f) Safety Measures) (Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 6: Evaluation, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of intent

All children attending Ardtona House School are of equal importance and are cared for equally. Teachers are deployed and the building is used in such a way as to minimise the chance of children removing themselves from the main group without being noticed, whilst allowing them a free choice of activities. In this way teachers can be made immediately aware of a child needing help or support, and react accordingly.

Procedure

- Children are welcomed into the school by a designated Teacher, who marks their presence in the daily register.
- A Teacher remains on in the classroom throughout the arrival and departure period of Ardtona House School and until all parents and carers have left the premises.
- The main door is kept secure at all times.
- Children's times of arrival and departure are noted on the register, and a note is made in the register if a child is to leave early or with another adult.
- Teachers are deployed throughout the school during the session, ensuring that no child is left alone for any period of time without an adult being aware of their location.
- The outdoor area is supervised.
- The outdoor area is securely fenced and the gate secure at all times.
- The rooms in which the children play are never left unsupervised/out of vision of teachers.

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- A Teacher remains on duty within the classroom at all times, unless all the children and teachers are in the outdoor area together.
- If all teachers and children are outside and a child needs to come inside, a teacher will accompany them inside.
- Visitors are screened before the door is unlatched to allow them access to the building.

In the event of a teacher not being able to locate a child on the premises:

- The premises will be searched thoroughly and immediately.
- The register will be called to determine which child(ren) are missing.
- The grounds surrounding Ardtana House School will be searched.
- The Principal will call the local Garda.
- The Principal will inform the parents.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate.

In the Event of a Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, teachers on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person/parent and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One teacher searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Principal contacts the local Garda station and reports the child as missing. Then follow their instructions.
- The Principal contacts the parent, who makes their way to the school or outing venue as agreed if they are not already with the group.
- Teachers take the remaining children back to the school if applicable.
- In an indoor venue, a teacher will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the local Garda Station if the child is not found.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate.

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Forms

Accident/Incident

PEST CONTROL

Principle

At Ardtona House School we work hard to keep a clean and hygienic environment for children, teachers and parents. Ardtona House School will ensure children and teachers are not exposed to pests (insects, cockroaches, rats, mice, etc.) pest residue, and the chemicals used to control them. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part V, 18, Premises and Facilities, 22 Sanitary Accommodation. (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Siolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation)(National Standard 17: premises, National Standard 18: Facilities, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

The Principal of Ardtona House School is the person designated to act as a liaison between the school and a pest control company if required.

Procedure

- Regular inspections will be performed by the Principal or a pest management professional (who is knowledgeable about pest control) or another person who is knowledgeable about pest biology and habits.
- Teachers should report to the Principal immediately if they have any concerns regarding pests of any kind. Teachers should be alert to the possibility of infestation on discovery of any of the following:
 - ✓ Direct sightings of vermin/pests
 - ✓ Droppings near food source
 - ✓ Evidence of nesting
 - ✓ Evidence of gnawing
- Food should be kept covered or stored in airtight pest proof containers.
- Spillages should be promptly cleaned up.
- Proper sanitation will be maintained and correct disposal of rubbish and food waste will be maintained to prevent conditions for pests.
- Water leaks will be repaired and standing water will be eliminated whenever possible.
- Repairs will be performed as needed to prevent pest access to buildings or to hiding spaces in walls and equipment.

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- Pest management decisions will be based on the results of regular inspections.
- If a pesticide is needed, the least hazardous pesticide is selected that will effectively control the pest problem.
- Pesticides will not be applied when children are present at Ardtona House School. Toys and other items handled by the children will be removed from the area before pesticides are applied. Children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
- In the event of an emergency where pests pose an immediate health threat to children and teachers (e.g. wasps) and pesticides are applied, ensure that children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
- At least two 1 days but not more than 30 days advance notice of pesticide application will be given to parents and teachers except in emergencies where pests pose an immediate health threat to children or teachers (e.g. wasps).
- Parents and teachers will be notified as soon as possible when advance notice is not provided and include an explanation of the emergency, the reason for the late notice and the name of pesticide applied.
- Access to bait boxes and other forms of pest control will never be accessible to children at Ardtona House School.
- A record of pest control measures will be kept

Individual Pests

Houseflies

Significance

Houseflies can transmit intestinal worms or their eggs and are potential vectors of disease such as food poisoning and gastro-enteritis. They will frequent and feed indiscriminately on any liquefiable solid food, putrefying material or food stored for human consumption.

Control

Flies have rapid, prolific breeding habits and high mobility. In order to break the life-cycle, control measures should be directed against larval and adult flies.

Hygiene/Management

Satisfactory hygiene is necessary to limit potential breeding sites and food sources. Entry of flies into buildings can be prevented by 1.12mm mesh fly screen, air curtains, bead screens or self closing door equipment with rubber seals.

Cockroaches

Distribution

Cockroaches are common in premises associated with the production or handling of food. Gregarious and nocturnal they spend the day hiding in cracks and crevices around areas such as sinks, drains, cookers, the backs of cupboards and in refrigerator motor compartments. They favour buildings with service ducts and complex plumbing installations which allow them to travel freely.

Significance

Cockroaches are potential vectors of diseases such as food poisoning and gastroenteritis and can spread antibiotic resistant bacteria of many types. Their diet is omnivorous and includes fermenting substances, soiled dressings, hair, leather, parchment, wallpaper, faeces and food for human consumption.

Control

Monitoring and control is essential although successful control of cockroaches is a complex subject, and depends very much upon tailoring control measures to the species concerned. Infestations can be difficult to control as cockroach eggs are poorly penetrated by insecticides. Consequently surveillance of the area by the pest control contractor may need to be prolonged.

Hygiene/Management

A high standard of hygiene will deny sources of food and hiding places.

Ants

(a) Black Ants:

Foraging worker ants cause a nuisance as they travel widely in search of food, following well-defined trails and clustering around the food source. Sweet foods are preferred. They are obviously an unpleasant sight and may damage food for human consumption.

(b) Pharaoh's Ants:

These 2mm omnivorous light brown ants are half the size of the black ants. They cannot breed without artificial heat, are very persistent and pose a serious cross infection risk. The ants may be found in wall cavities, heating pipes, behind sinks and ovens and therefore in laundry, linen rooms or kitchens. They are particularly attracted to sweet or light protein.

Wasps

Wasp stings cause pain and distress. Some individuals are particularly sensitive. Wasp nests are only used for one season, so it may be possible to put up with the problem temporarily. They are often found in cavities in brickwork, in air bricks and roof vents. The nest can be treated by the Trust's pest control contractor; such work may be best carried out in the evening or weekend as poisoned stupefied wasps can cause problems. Particular attention should be paid to areas around rubbish bins that should be kept in a hygienic condition.

Other Insect Pests

There are many other insect pests. The most common of these being flies of various species, crickets, silverfish and the stored product insects and mites who can be found infesting dried foods such as flour weevils.

Mice and Rats

These are the vertebrates with greatest potential for damage. Modern rodenticides are extremely efficient in the eradication of mice and rats.

Rodents have been known to gnaw through electric cables and cause fires. All sightings and other evidence of their presence should be reported to the Principal.

All food and organic waste shall be kept in rodent proof containers.

Squirrels

The most serious damage in urban areas arises where the squirrel enters the roof spaces of houses by climbing the walls or jumping from nearby trees. Once inside, they chew woodwork, ceilings, and insulation on electrical wiring or tear up the loft insulation to form a dray. The best method of control is to proof the building/loft. Prevention is better than cure.

If a cure is required the best form of control is trapping with the use of a squirrel trap.

Foxes

Foxes may occasionally spread disease such as toxocara and leptospirosis but the risk is believed to be small. More significantly, foxes do cause nuisance in a number of ways. There may be damage to gardens caused when digging for food, and of course the indiscriminate depositing of faeces.

Killing foxes is both unnecessary and unlikely to provide a long-term solution as other foxes move in to vacant territories.

Birds

The nuisance of birds can be controlled in the first instance by preventative measures, e.g. blocking of nesting holes and the application of devices to discourage perching. Netting and trapping can also be considered with the aim of immediate release away from the area/location of capture. Whatever method is employed it should take into account whether the birds are currently in a nesting season or whether they are protected by law.

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Advice should be sought from the Irish Society for the Protection of Birds (ISPB).

Forms

Record of Pest Control

SAFETY and SECURITY

Principle

Ardtona House School will ensure that it takes all reasonable procedures in relation to the security of the school, employees working in the school and children in attendance. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 6 First Aid, 9 (3) Behaviour Management, Part V, 27 Safety Measures) ([Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare](#)) ([National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians](#), [National Standard 17: Premises](#), [National Standard 20: Safety](#))

Statement of Intent

The security practices are applicable to all teachers working in Ardtona House School.

Policy and Procedure

- It is crucial in the provision of a school to provide a service that is safe for the children and the teachers.

A school is most likely to be safe when:

- Every reasonable precaution is taken in terms of the provision of the premises and equipment.
- Every reasonable precaution is taken in terms of the upkeep of premises and equipment.
- There is an adequate ratio of teachers to children.
- All teachers are aware of the Department of Health and Children - ***Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*** and the Child Protection Policy of the school.
- The entrances and exits are clearly marked and kept clear of furniture and equipment.
- Any person gaining admission to the building either to collect children or on any other business have limited access and are accompanied by a staff member at all times.
- There is a clear policy on procedures to be undertaken in the event of an accident / fire in the school and this is known to teachers and children.
- An effective fire drill routine is established and practised on a regular basis.

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- At least one teacher is trained in First Aid procedures and is on duty at all times.
- A suitably equipped first-aid box is on the premises.
- The materials contained in bedding and the internal furnishing of the premises have adequate fire retardant properties and have low levels of toxicity when on fire.
- All heat emitting surfaces are protected by a fixed guard or are thermostatically controlled to ensure safe surface temperatures.
- The hot water provided for use by preschool children is thermostatically controlled to ensure a safe temperature. It should not exceed 43°.
- Adequate arrangements are in place to summon medical assistance promptly in an emergency.
- Records are up to date on teachers and children.
- Parents are requested not to admit anyone else into the school whilst entering or leaving unless they know them.
- We ask all parents and teachers to check that all doors are securely closed behind them, at all times.
- Teachers will know what children are present at all times and they will be adequately supervised in accordance with the recommended ratios.
- Safety checks are done regularly to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected.
- We ask that all potential collectors be introduced to the teachers and Principal in advance
- If a child is being collected by anyone other than the parents or usual designated person, the teachers must be informed, the parent will be asked to sign a daily record book and give a brief description of the person.
- Please inform the person collecting your child that they will be required to provide identification, to confirm who they are. This is to ensure our children's safety.
- In the event of a parent collecting a child on behalf of another parent, prior arrangements must be made. The parent will be asked to sign the record book.

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- Regular exchange of information with parents is important, parents must inform Ardtona House School of change of personal details.(e.g.)new house, phone number.
- All TV's, DVD players, cameras, computers and laptops are stored securely when not in use.
- The main entrance door is locked and can only be opened by a teacher after they have identified who the visitor is.
- Teachers have access to a telephone on the premises. Emergency numbers are displayed beside the phone.
- Parent's emergency numbers are easily accessible to teachers.

Forms

Registration Form

Employee Information

SPILLAGES and HAZARDS

Principle

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, Part V, 18 (d) Premises and Facilities, 25 Equipment and Materials) (Siolta Standard 2: Environments) (National Standard 17: Premises, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

All persons working in Ardtona House School

Policy and Procedure

Spillages

In the interests of health and safety the following procedures must be used when cleaning up spillages:

- Disposable gloves provided by Ardtona House School must be used by teachers to clean up any body spillages or faeces. When changing any clothing, which has urine or faeces on it, this procedure should also be observed.
- Warning notices should be displayed where appropriate.
- Any vomit or blood should be dealt with immediately by wearing disposable gloves and applying Milton directly on to the spillage, before cleaning up.

Hazards

If you discover anything, which may be a potential hazard to you, the children, other teachers or members of the public who may be using Ardtona House School you must take immediate remedial action. Report the hazard to the Principal who will record the hazard and take the appropriate action to rectify the hazard.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

The purpose of Universal Precautions or Infection Control Guidelines is to protect workers and School users from contact with any infectious organisms.

The basic principle is to treat all body substances (i.e. urine, faeces, vomit, mucus and blood) as potentially infected and if workers are in contact with same to ensure that they are informed and protected.

Guidelines

- Latex gloves must be available at all times.
- If handling any soiled dressings, latex gloves must be worn and all waste materials placed in disposable bags provided for infectious waste.
- If cleaning up blood spills or any bodily fluid substances, latex gloves must be worn.
- Before cleaning up any spillage make sure that there is no broken glass, syringe needles, or blades present that could cut or pierce you.
- The spillage should be mopped up and the area cleaned thoroughly with a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water. Any household bleach is adequate.
- If a child or teacher vomits on site, cover the vomit thoroughly with paper towels. A member of staff wearing household rubber gloves should clean the area into a plastic bag and then wash the area thoroughly with hot water and disinfectant.

Needle Stick Injury Guidelines

Should a needle stick injury accidentally occur the following procedures should be followed:

- Squeeze the area to encourage bleeding and to expel any contaminated blood and wash area thoroughly with soap and water.
- Inform the Principal and get medical attention as soon as possible.
- Record the incident in the accident report book or form

Forms

Accident/Incident

SUN SAFETY

Principle

At Ardtona House School we want teachers and children to enjoy the sun safely. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 20: Safety)

Statement of Intent

We will work with teachers and parents to achieve sun safety.

Policy

Ardtona House School requests that parents:

- Apply sun cream to their child/children before they attend school as in the first instance it is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun cream to their child/children.
- If necessary put named sun cream in the child's bag and request the Teacher to apply the sun cream. Every effort will be made by the teachers to do this.
- Provide a sunhat for children.

Ardtona House School will ensure that:

- On very hot days children will have reduced exposure to sunlight.
- Where possible, children can seek shade when outside in the sun.
- Ensure that children will wear a sunhat if provided by the parent.

We will work towards Sun safety through the following

Education

- Discussion with the children about the sun and the need for protection.
- Letter to be sent to parents and guardians with regard to sun cream and protection.
- Time spent in discussion at staff meetings about sun safety in the garden.

Timetabling:

- Children will spend more time playing outside before 11am and after 3pm, and less time over lunchtime.

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Clothing:

- We will actively encourage all children to wear a hat when playing outside – for any length of time.
- A small supply of hats will be available for those children who have forgotten their own.

Sunscreen:

- We will send letters home asking for parents to apply sun cream to their child before bringing them to school each morning.
- We will also ask parents for permission for teachers to apply sun cream onto their child when appropriate.
- Parents should bring in sun cream in a named bottle.

Drinks:

- Water will be available at all times in the classroom.
- Water will also be available in the garden while children are playing.

Forms

Sun Cream Record

‘SWINE FLU’ POLICY

Purpose

This policy and procedure has been developed in response to the World Health Organisation confirmation of the international spread of ‘swine’ flu. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 5 health, Welfare and Development of the Child) (Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 12: Health Care)

Scope

This policy document is applicable to all employees, students, children and the parents in relation to Ardtona House School

Policy and Procedure

Ardtona House School is committed to ensuring the well being of employees and the children in our care. The policy provides guidelines and the procedures that will be taken in the event of an outbreak of swine flu (H1N1) that may be serious enough to effect the running and business of Ardtona House School.

Ardtona House School are aware that children are very susceptible to getting this new virus and the school may serve as a central point for the spread of the virus. We will endeavour to ensure that procedures are in place so that we can work towards minimising the spread of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009. Ardtona House School will ensure that by implementing good health practices and having in place protocols to ensure that we can deal with such an outbreak should it occur. Ardtona House School will develop contingency plans to manage flu and ensure that teachers, children and parents are familiar with those plans.

All employees are expected to take personal responsibility for following the policies and procedures of Ardtona House School and in the event of a flu pandemic to act in accordance with any instructions given to them which is designed to protect the health and safety of themselves and the children in their care. Ardtona House School will keep parents briefed and will also request that they follow any instructions issued by the school in order to ensure the health and safety of all children and employees.

Swine Flu and the Symptoms

The symptoms of swine flu are broadly the same as those of ordinary flu, but may be more severe and cause more serious complications. The typical symptoms are:

- sudden fever, and
- sudden cough

Other symptoms may include:

- runny nose
- sneezing

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- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea or stomach upset
- headache
- tiredness
- chills
- aching muscles
- limb or joint pain, and
- sore throat

Employees must constantly be aware and they must pay particular attention to the observation of all children for symptoms as listed above. If a child does fall ill, then the employee should immediately follow the illness policy and procedure and parents should be notified immediately to take the child home.

It is most likely that nearly all persons with H1N1 flu will have at least two of these symptoms. There are a number of categories of people at higher risk of serious complications from seasonal flu. These include children younger than 5 years old and pregnant women

Good Hygiene Practices

Managing the spread of illness is possible with proper hand washing procedures, by cleaning toys properly and through education.

Vigilance by all employees in relation to hygiene is critical in order to prevent children and teachers becoming sick. Ardtona House School will continue to operate rigorous hygiene practices. Employees, parents and visitors will be required to strictly adhere to protocols in relation to hygiene and good practice which will be displayed throughout the building and may be found at the end of this policy and procedure.

Effective Hand Washing

All employees, volunteers, and children must follow the procedure for hand washing at the following times:

1. Upon arrival for the day or when moving from one class to another
2. before and after:
 - Eating
 - Handling food
 - Giving medication
 - Playing in water that is used by more than one person
3. After:
 - Using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
 - Handling bodily fluid (mucus, blood, vomit), from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from sores

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- Handling uncooked food, especially raw meat and poultry
- Handling pets and other animals
- Playing in sandboxes
- Cleaning or handling the rubbish

N.B. - Washing hands after eating is especially important for children who eat with their hands, to decrease the amount of saliva (which may contain organisms) on their hands

Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Many studies have shown that unwashed or improperly washed hands are the primary carriers of infections. It must be noted that wearing gloves is NOT protection against bacteria or the H1N1 Virus (Swine Flu).

Children and employees should wash their hands using the following method:

- Check to be sure a clean, dry towel or electric hand drier is available
- Turn on warm water, to a comfortable temperature (in line with pre-school regulations)
- Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap/gel to hands
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, and continue for at least 20 seconds (as long as it takes to sing happy birthday twice). Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands
- Rinse hands under running water, no less than 15 degrees C and no more than 43 degrees C, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands
- Dry hands with the clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel or electric hand drier
- If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel
- Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined bin with a secure lid
- Hand washing signs will be displayed

Teachers should provide assistance with hand washing for children who cannot wash their hands independently.

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After assisting the child with hand washing, the employee should wash his or her own hands.

Safe Nose Blowing

Employees and children should blow or wipe their noses with disposable, one-use tissues and then discard them in a plastic-lined, covered, hands-free bin. After blowing the nose, hands should be washed. Every room in the school will have a supply of tissues.

Toys and Activities

The following steps should be taken bearing in mind the need to continue to be sensitive to children's needs and preferences and not removing favourite or comfort toys.

- Sand play and water play can be continued but children should always wash hands after these activities.
- If possible, provide separate sets of toys that children regularly put in their mouths, e.g. crayons and pencils.
 - An individual set of crayons, clearly marked with the child's name should be made available.
- Other communal toys that are hard to sterilise should be removed, e.g. soft toys.
- Sharing of wind instruments, e.g. tin whistles should be avoided and should be sterilised after use.

Additional Cleaning Practices in the Event of Outbreak of Swine Flu

The routine frequency of cleaning and sanitation in Ardtona House School will be increased whenever there are outbreaks of illness or when recommended by the health department to control certain infectious diseases. All surfaces, furnishings, and equipment that are not in good repair or that have been contaminated by body fluids should be taken out of service until they are repaired, cleaned, and, if contaminated, sanitised effectively.

All cleaning schedules will state item/area to be cleaned, frequency of cleaning, method/procedure, and person responsible, in line with the pre-school regulations.

Since children will touch any surface they can reach (including floors), all surfaces in a child care facility may be contaminated and can spread infectious disease agents. Therefore, all surfaces must be properly sanitised.

Mops should be assumed to be contaminated since they are used to remove contamination from other surfaces.

The bleach solution used for sanitising the child care environment is also appropriate for sanitising mops and rags. Detachable mop heads and reusable rags may be cleaned in a washing machine and dried in a mechanical dryer or hung to dry.

Communicating with Parents

Concerned and informed parents are the first line of defense against the spread of Swine Flu. Ardtona House School acknowledges that parents/guardians have the power to prevent our school from infection, simply by keeping their child home when they do not feel well or exhibit symptoms. Ardtona House School will keep parents informed on a regular basis on information pertaining to swine flu. We will request parents to ensure that all details provided to the school are up-to-date. Emergency contact details must also be up-to date.

Procedure in the event of Swine Flu

Early recognition of influenza like symptoms and subsequent actions

- All teachers should be able to recognise symptoms of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza.
- The symptoms of pandemic influenza are like those of seasonal flu. There is usually sudden onset of fever (greater than 38°C/100°F) and cough or sore throat. Other symptoms are as outlined above.

Actions for caring for a child who becomes ill with symptoms suggestive of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza while in the school

- Parents/guardians should be contacted to bring the child with influenza like illness (ILI) home as soon as possible
- The school will encourage parents to seek early medical assessment for all children less than 5 years of age and for children with flu-like symptoms at higher risk of complications from flu. Teachers with flu-like symptoms at higher risk of complications from flu should do the same
- The school will have prior permission from parents to enable urgent medical assessment if required.
- We will ensure there is appropriate space (a separate sick room where possible) which can be used for the care of children who feel ill, before their parents can collect them. Ideally this space should be away from other children to help prevent spread of the infection. We will ensure that the space is well stocked with appropriate medical supplies and is prepared for children with the symptoms of flu. An employee will be nominated to look after the child in an isolated area, if possible, apart from the remainder of the children. When providing care for the child, the teacher will observe good hand hygiene practices
- When the child has gone home, the isolation area will be thoroughly cleaned

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- Employees at risk of complications if infected will not care for symptomatic children
 - Employees should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand rub before and after any contact with symptomatic children or other teachers and their environment.
 - Employees and children should be encouraged to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.

In the event that cases of influenza due to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 occurs in Ardtona House School the following actions will be implemented:

- The child/ teacher with H1N1 2009 influenza will be advised to stay at home for at least seven days from the onset of symptoms. The Department of Public Health will be contacted and advised of the diagnosis. The Department may consider closure of the school, or individual room, if there is concern about the potential for spread of the virus, particularly if there is more than one person confirmed with Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza. If closure is advised, alternative arrangements will be needed for care of children.

Actions in the event of an unusual number of people presenting with influenza like illness or unusual severity of illness (eg child requiring admission to ICU)

The Department of Public Health will be contacted by phone

HSE East Tel 01-6352145/01-63522178

Closure

In the event that cases of influenza due to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus occur in the school and that the circumstances are such that Public Health advises closure, it will be essential to have a communications plan which will include:

- Up to date contact details of the children's parents/carers – Ardtona House School should ensure that the identified guardian has provided current contact and an emergency contact number.
- An estimate of the number of children who may need to remain in the school e.g. parents working and unable to collect until specified time – these children may need to be isolated and cared for until collected.

Employees Required to Stay at Home in the Event of Family Illness

Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with H1N1 flu should come to work as usual. There is no need for any employee or child (including those at risk of complications and those who are pregnant) to stay at home from the school if they are well. An employee should monitor their health every day and follow the school's sick leave policy and procedure in the event they become ill.

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Employees must ensure that they inform the Principal in the event they are diagnosed with H1N1 flu. Employees must take more than usual precautions in terms of contact with co-workers and personal hygiene. Employees who have an underlying medical condition or who are pregnant should call their doctor for advice, because they may need to receive influenza antiviral drugs to prevent illness.

Exclusion policy

The school will operate an exclusion policy for seven (7) days

We will remind parents/guardians and carers that children displaying flu-like symptoms while at home (weekends and holidays) should stay at home and not return to the school for seven days from onset of symptoms.

Keep Up-to-Date

Ardtona House School will review and update this policy as information is updated through the World Health Organisation.

Helpline

The HSE has launched a new information service for the public on the swine flu virus- influenza A(H1N1).

The Flu Information Line, a 24-hour Freephone information service, provides recorded information on the A(H1N1) flu, its symptoms, what to do if you are worried, and travel advice from the Department of Health.

The information line number is 1800 94 1100

TOILETING

Principle

In line with Child Protection Guidelines, health and safety and best practice, Ardtona House School will adopt the following procedures in relation to toileting. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 9 (2) Behaviour Management) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 18: Facilities)

Statement of Intent

All teachers who work with children in the school must follow these procedures

Policy and Procedure

General Toileting Procedures

At all times it is important to respect the rights and needs of the children in our care. When a child needs to use the toilet allow him/ her the privacy to do so. If the child asks you to accompany them to the toilet, do so.

- Go to the bathroom door ask the child if she wants the toilet door left open or closed.
- Reassure the child that you will wait outside the door where they can call if they need you.
- If the child asks you to help undo buttons or zippers where possible have another teacher in the same vicinity for both the child's and teacher's protection.
- No two children will be permitted to enter a toilet cubicle together. This is to ensure their privacy as well as their safety.
- Young children need encouragement and help with self-care, wiping bottoms, flushing toilet, washing hands etc.
- Teachers must use the disposable gloves and aprons provided, if cleaning up any spillages.
- Teachers should be sensitive to accidents.
- Teachers should maintain a pleasant atmosphere.
- The child's privacy should be maintained.

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Toileting Accidents

A full set of labelled clothing should be provided by parents so that if a child has an 'accident' of this nature they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change.

All such incidents will be recorded in the Incident Book or form and the parent/carer informed.

Forms

Accident/Incident

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VACCINATION SCHEDULE

Age to Vaccinate	Type of Vaccination
At birth	BCG tuberculosis vaccine (given in maternity hospitals or a HSE clinic)
At 2 months Free from your GP	6 in 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria • Tetanus • Whooping cough (Pertussis) • Hib (Haemophilus influenzae B) • Polio (Inactivated poliomyelitis) • Hepatitis B PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine)
At 4 months Free from your GP	6 in 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria • Tetanus • Whooping cough (Pertussis) • Hib (Haemophilus influenzae B) • Polio (Inactivated poliomyelitis) • Hepatitis B Men C (Meningococcal C)
At 6 months Free from your GP	6 in 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria • Tetanus • Whooping cough (Pertussis) • Hib (Haemophilus influenzae B) • Polio (Inactivated poliomyelitis) • Hepatitis B PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine) Men C (Meningococcal C)
At 12 months Free from your GP	MMR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measles • Mumps • Rubella PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine)
At 13 months Free from your GP	Men C (Meningococcal C) Hib (Haemophilus influenzae B)
At 4 - 5 years Free in school or from your GP	4 in 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria • Tetanus • Whooping cough (Pertussis) • Polio (Inactivated poliomyelitis) MMR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measles • Mumps • Rubella
At 11 - 14 years Free in school	Td <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diphtheria • Tetanus
At 12 years (1st year second level school) Girls only Free in school	HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

STAFF

ABSENCE COVER

Regulation 8 and 14: Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006

Principle

Ardtona House School will ensure that there is always staff cover and that the school is maintained according to the child/ teacher ratios as set down by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 8 Management and Staffing)([Síolta Standard 10: Organisation](#), [Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation](#)) ([National Standard 5: Organisation and Management](#))

Statement of Intent

We have a panel of relief teachers available to cover absences, including sick leave and/or we can also request that part-time teachers work extra hours. Relief teachers are Garda vetted and can be contacted at times of emergency. The school will not operate if the appropriate numbers of teachers are not available. Ardtona House School will always operate within the appropriate ratios.

Procedure

Teachers are expected to report for work each day unless incapacitated by illness, absent with the prior permission of the Principal or otherwise unavoidably absent. It is essential that Ardtona House School has an adequate number of teachers to care for the children. It is therefore essential that all employees adhere to the following in the event of personal illness.

Employees Will:

- Employees suffering from a contagious illness should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Principal immediately.
- If unable to attend work employees must phone in and personally speak to Margot O'Connor the Principal on the day of absenteeism before 7.am.
- If an employee knows that they will be absent on the day before you should telephone the Principal by 4.30pm.
- When speaking with Principal employees should indicate the nature of illness, the possible duration and when they will return to work. It is also required that employees speak with Principal either on the day of absenteeism or the day before they are due to return to work before the school closes in order to confirm that they will in fact be returning to work. This will give Ardtona House School staff sufficient time to arrange cover if you are not fully recovered and are unable to return to work due to this fact.

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- Emails, voice mails or text messages are not an appropriate way of conveying this information and to do so may invoke the disciplinary process.
- In the event of an employee being absent for three or more days, the employee will need to present a doctor's certificate to the Principal.
- In the case of long-term illness a certificate must be provided at weekly intervals unless an alternative agreement has been approved by the Principal.
- Ardtona House School reserves the right to refer an employee to a doctor or Occupational Health Physician appointed and paid for by the school, which may involve a medical examination. This may also be the case when an employee is returning to work after a prolonged or serious illness or where the employer may have concerns about the employee's health and well being.

Management will:

- Arrange for appropriate cover by
 - a) Directing "floater" teacher to the appropriate area if available
 - b) Asking part time teachers to work extra hours
 - c) Contact relief teachers from the approved list
- Ensure that all relief/temporary teachers are suitably qualified and Garda vetted.
- Ensure that Ardtona House School sick policy is adhered to.
- Ensure all employees will participate in a "Return-to-work interview" on their return to work from sick leave.
- Ensure that appropriate adult child ratios are met according to the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006 at all times.

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SERVICE	AGE	ADULT/CHILD RATIO
PRIMARY SCHOOL	4 - 8 YEARS	1:20 with classroom support
SESSIONAL	3 - 5 YEARS	1:10
ECCE PLACES	3.2 – 5.7 YEARS	1:11
PART TIME	3 – 6 YEARS	1:8

PERSON IN CHARGE

Margot O'Connor the Principal is the person in charge of Ardtona House School. In her absence Valerie Heavey will be in charge.

Forms

Return to Work Interview

EMPLOYEE INFECTION CONTROL

Principles

Employers, owners and principals of pre-school services have a legal duty to protect employees at work as laid out in the Health and Safety Act (2005).

Statement of Intent

At Ardtona House School it is our aim to minimise the spread of infection for teachers and children through the implementation of controls which reduce the transmission and spread of germs.

- We aim to promote and maintain the health of children and teachers through the control of infectious illnesses.
- We aim to control infection by providing on-going infection control training for teachers (see also Hand-washing, Toileting, Food Hygiene, Cleanliness and Hygiene, Spillages and Hazards, Swine Flu, Illness and Infection Control Policies).
- All teachers should be made aware at induction (and regularly thereafter) of the need for exclusion if they develop symptoms of gastrointestinal illness, fever or skin rashes any one of which may pose a risk of infection to children (and others).
- Teachers and children are required to have up to date immunisations.
- All new teachers including temporary and part time teachers will undergo induction training including training in infection prevention and control.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part IV, 14 Records, Part V, 18 Premises and Facilities, 22 Sanitary Accommodation, 27 Safety Measures) (Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 12: Health Care, National Standard 18: Facilities)

Disease control is most likely to be successful when the following three principles are followed

1. Hand washing should be used at every opportunity.
2. Immunisation: **ALL** children **AND** teachers should be appropriately immunised.
3. Exclusion - Any un-well **teachers** or **child** should be excluded.

Immunisations

Teachers that are appropriately immunised pose a significantly smaller risk to the children in their care and, are in turn, protected against the dangers that certain vaccine preventable infectious diseases pose to themselves and to their unborn children. Immunisation is an important public health preventive measure and it is the responsibility of all citizens to ensure they avail of the immunisation services provided by the State. All staff should ensure that they are adequately immunised prior to commencement of employment.

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- All teachers should have up-to-date rubella and tetanus vaccinations as a minimum. Additional checks/vaccinations such as TB, polio or Hepatitis A should be maintained as good practise.

Pregnant Employees

It is important that employees who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should ensure that they are appropriately immunised and compliant with infection control precautions.

If a pregnant woman* develops a rash or is in direct contact with someone with a potentially infectious rash, this should be investigated by a doctor. The greatest risk to pregnant women from such infections comes from their own child/children, rather than the workplace.

- Chickenpox can affect the pregnancy if a woman has not already had the infection. Report exposure to midwife and GP at any stage of exposure. The GP and antenatal carer will arrange a blood test to check for immunity. Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox, so anyone who has not had chickenpox is potentially vulnerable to the infection if they have close contact with a case of shingles.
- Rubella (German measles). If a pregnant woman comes into contact with rubella she should inform her GP and antenatal carer immediately to ensure investigation. The infection may affect the developing baby if the woman is not immune and is exposed in early pregnancy.
- Slapped cheek disease (parvovirus B19) can occasionally affect an unborn child. If exposed early in pregnancy (before 20 weeks), inform whoever is giving antenatal care as this must be investigated promptly.
- Measles during pregnancy can result in early delivery or even loss of the baby. If a pregnant woman is exposed she should immediately inform whoever is giving antenatal care to ensure investigation.
- All female employees under the age of 25 working with young children should have evidence of two doses of MMR vaccine.

*The above advice also applies to pregnant students

Disclaimer

New employees who do provide evidence of vaccinations or who have not had vaccinations will be asked to sign a disclaimer indicating that they have been fully informed of the risks inherent in this choice of action. Whilst they may choose to incur such risk themselves, they must be made fully aware of their particular responsibility to minimise risk to others (e.g. children in their care and colleagues)

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and to report exposures to relevant infections should they arise. Work exclusion on a temporary basis may then be necessary.

Compliance with infection control requirements are considered an essential contractual pre-requisite for all employees.

Exclusions and Notification of Exposure to Infectious Conditions

As outlined in your contract of employment, you are expected to report for work each business day unless you are incapacitated by illness, absent with the prior permission of the Principal or otherwise unavoidably absent. In our business it is essential that we have an adequate number of workers to care for the children. It is in your interest, your colleagues and the child's that you are of full health and well being.

If you are suffering from a contagious illness you should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Principal immediately.

Exclusion guidelines as recommended by the Preschool Environmental Health Officer apply in the case of all suspected infectious conditions. These guidelines are contained in our policies and procedures and displayed in the school and extend to both children and teachers.

Teachers and Parents will be informed should teachers, children or visitors to the school report the presence of any contagious condition to the Principal.

An exclusion policy applies for all persons suffering from an infectious disease in the school for both teachers and children. Any person suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, infectious cough/upper respiratory tract infection, communicable parasitic infection on hands/arms (scabies etc) shall be excluded from the school until symptoms subside and the person has been medically cleared to return.

Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with an infectious condition or if they have been in contact with any infectious conditions must inform the Principal. This information will remain confidential.

Any person returning to work following an absence which could have health and safety implications (infectious disease, back complaint) must provide Fitness to Work Cert from their doctor.

Unwell children will be excluded from the school until the appropriate exclusion period for that illness is finished. (See Illness Policy)

Children and teachers should remain at home if they are suffering from general diarrhoea or vomiting until 48 hours after being symptom free.

Reporting

Employees of Ardtona House School should report to the Principal any exposure to infections should they arise as soon as possible. This may be through visits to other childcare services, family members, friends or any other persons. This will allow the Principal to inform any teachers who this disclosure may impact upon. If an employee has an infectious disease they should not come to work in the first instance without consulting with the Principal and confirming that the particular infectious disease has passed its incubation period. Work exclusion on a temporary basis may then be necessary.

Management Responsibilities

- The Principal will keep records of teachers and children's immunisations.
- The Principal will record all details of illness reported to them by teachers or reported by parents of a child attending the school. These details will include the name, symptoms, dates and duration of illness.
- The Principal will report an outbreak of any infectious disease to the Preschool Environmental Health Officer and the Public Health Department.
- A worker specific risk assessment shall be completed each trimester, when Management is notified of the pregnancy of an employee. Suitable controls shall be introduced in to the workplace to ensure the work completed by the employee in question does not pose a risk of injury or ill health to mother/baby, so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular issues around, lifting/carrying children/furniture/equipment/materials, seating provisions and notification of any infectious conditions that have been reported.
- The Principal will notify the teachers and parents if a member of staff has been in contact with an infectious condition. The name of the staff member involved will remain strictly confidential.
- A doctor's certificate may be required for certain conditions to ensure they are no longer contagious before children or teachers return to the school.

Controlling Infection

The purpose of employing infection control procedures is to reduce the number of germs to a level where there is no longer a threat to public health.

This is done by on-going infection control training for teachers i.e. – importance of hand washing, food hygiene, cleaning routines etc. thus ensuring hygiene is applied correctly and the risk of infection is minimised.

Any child or adult with symptoms of an infectious illness will be asked not to attend Ardtona House School until they are no longer infectious. The management of

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Ardtona House School will ensure all areas of the premises are thoroughly disinfected, including play areas, toilets, toys and all equipment.

All teachers are aware of the procedures for dealing with appropriate daily and weekly cleaning routines and bodily fluid spillages. All cleaning is checked by management.

Infectious illness can cause significant ill health among young children and can be transmitted by direct or indirect contact including:

- Contact with infected people or animals.
- By infecting oneself with the body's own germs.
- By hand to mouth transmission.
- By the air / by insects, pests, animals.
- Indirect transmission e.g. toys, door handles, toilets, floors, tabletops etc.
- By direct – person to person.

Hand Hygiene:

- Hand washing facilities are always available for adults and children and include hot (not exceeding 43 degrees C) and cold water, liquid soap and dry clean towels.
- Hand washing facilities are available in all toilets and the kitchen,
- Children are encouraged and reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after playing outside. See Hand Washing Policy.
- We also occasionally use anti bacterial alcohol gel.

Teachers must wash their hands:

- before preparing or serving food
- before eating or drinking
- after going to the toilet
- after assisting children at the toilet
- after dealing with any body fluids
- after cleaning procedures
- after caring for sick children
- after handling soiled clothing or items
- after dealing with waste
- after removing disposable gloves and/or aprons
- after tea and lunch breaks
- after smoking

Hand Washing Technique

Wet hands under hot water (not exceeding 43°C for children to prevent scalding), apply liquid soap, rub vigorously paying particular attention to palms, backs, wrists, fingernails and fingers and rubbing between each finger and around the thumbs, rinse, dry thoroughly using a clean dry towel and turn off taps using the towel. (See Hand Washing Policy).

Infectious Diseases Relevant to

The following are diseases relevant to teachers. Many are vaccine preventable (i.e. they can be prevented by appropriate immunisation). Teachers should be fully immunised, i.e. they should have completed their own childhood immunisation schedules. They should make available to the Occupational Health Service or doctor carrying out their PEHA (Pre Employment Health Assessment) all details of their immunisation records to date. All teachers working with children should have evidence of immunity to mumps, measles and rubella (MMR). Immunisation should be in accordance with National Immunisation Guidelines.

Chickenpox (Varicella)

Chickenpox infection in pregnancy may cause more severe illness and poses a risk to the foetus. All female employees of childbearing age should discuss testing for Chickenpox immunity with their GP (or occupational health provider).

Those with negative serology should be offered vaccination. All other non-immune employees should also be offered vaccination.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A infection in young children is usually sub-clinical (very mild illness, with little or no symptoms or signs). Under normal circumstances, the risk of transmission to employees and children can be minimised by careful attention to personal hygiene. There is no indication for routine vaccination against hepatitis A. However, if a case of hepatitis A is identified in a childcare facility, employees and children should be offered passive immunoprophylaxis and/or active immunisation in accordance with National Immunisation Guidelines.

Hepatitis B

There is no indication for teachers to receive hepatitis B vaccine routinely since good implementation of standard precautions should provide adequate protection against blood and body fluid exposure. Furthermore, now that hepatitis B vaccine has been included in the routine childhood immunisation schedule, infants and young children will not pose a risk in the future.

There is no need for employees with chronic hepatitis B infection to be excluded from working in a childcare setting.

Influenza

Influenza has a tendency to spread readily through congregate settings such as schools. Outbreaks of influenza also occur in childcare facilities and are likely to have a risk of infection similar to healthcare workers in paediatric settings. As a result, those who are in recognised risk groups for influenza should ensure that they are fully immunised against influenza (risk groups for seasonal influenza can be found on the website of the National Immunisation Office at <http://www.immunisation.ie/en/AdultImmunisation/FluVaccination/>).

Measles

All employees working with children should have evidence of immunity to measles. Infection with measles during pregnancy can result in early delivery or even loss of the baby. Therefore, if a non-immune pregnant woman is exposed to measles, her GP or antenatal care provider should be informed immediately to ensure appropriate management.

Mumps

All employees working with children should have evidence of immunity to mumps.

Rubella (German Measles)

All employees working with children should have evidence of immunity to rubella. Rubella may have devastating consequences on the developing baby if a non-immune mother is exposed in early pregnancy. If a pregnant woman comes in contact with rubella and is unaware of her immune status, she should contact her GP or antenatal care provider immediately to ensure appropriate investigation.

Slapped Cheek Disease (Parvovirus B19)

Simple hygiene measures including scrupulous hand washing provide the most effective method of prevention and control of this viral disease. There is no vaccine available. Parvovirus B19 can occasionally affect an unborn child. Therefore, women exposed early in pregnancy (before 20 weeks) should inform their GP or antenatal care provider to ensure appropriate investigation and follow-up.

Tuberculosis (TB)

The pre-employment health assessment (PEHA) should include a risk assessment for tuberculosis (screening questions for active TB, previous history of TB, the possibility of recent exposure to active TB and the individual's BCG immune status). Those undertaking such assessments should be familiar with the National Guidelines on the Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Ireland 2010 found at www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/A-Z/VaccinePreventable/TuberculosisTB/Guidance/.

Employees can be considered to be high priority (if they come from countries with annual TB notification rates of $\geq 40/100,000$ TB cases per year) or low priority if not.

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All employees should be aware of the classic symptoms of TB (persistent cough of at least three weeks duration, night sweats, anorexia and weight loss) and should be encouraged to report such symptoms should they arise. They should be made aware (e.g. at induction) of the particular vulnerability of young children to infectious TB.

**Information on Infectious Diseases Relevant to Childcare Staff taken from the -
Preschool and Childcare Facility Subcommittee Management of Infectious
Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings- Published by the
HSE (HPSC) 2007**

<http://www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/A-Z/LifeStages/Childcare/File,13444,en.pdf>

Forms

Employee Immunisation Disclaimer

Pregnant Employee Risk Assessment

Employee Information

GARDA VETTING

Regulation 8 and 14: Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006

Developed according to Tusla- The Child and Family Agency Procedure: Garda Vetting, Employee References [and recorded validations] & Qualifications

Purpose

It is the purpose of Ardtona House School to ensure that appropriate vetting of all teachers, students and volunteers who have access to children is carried out. This requires getting references from past employers and completing Garda vetting through the National Vetting Bureau (NVB). Ardtona House School process their Garda vetting through Barnardos. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II, 8 Management and Staffing, Part IV, 14 (1) (b) Records) (Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation) (National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 11: Child Protection)

Scope

All employees, volunteers and students working in Ardtona House School must be Garda vetted.

The Early Years Inspectors will require that all employees are Garda vetted before they commence employment with Ardtona House School.

Applicants that work unsupervised with children may not take up a post until a satisfactory outcome of the Garda vetting process in accordance with these guidelines is obtained.

Policy

The Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006 require any person carrying on a pre-school service must ensure appropriate vetting of all teachers, students and volunteers who have access to a child. This involves:

1. Checking employer references in respect of teachers and checking reputable sources in respect of students and volunteers.
2. Seeking Garda vetting from An Garda Síochána.
3. In respect of applicants who have lived abroad, ensuring that these persons provide the necessary police vetting from other police authorities.

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Regulations require that schools complete vetting prior to any person being appointed or being allowed access to children. Allowing someone to start work before Garda vetting has been received is regarded as non-compliant under the Childcare Regulations and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

Employees are required to complete a Garda Vetting Application Form in accordance with Guidelines for Completing Garda Vetting issued by the NVB

Employment with Ardtona House School is subject to a satisfactory outcome of the Garda Vetting Process. Where an employee is successful for a position with Ardtona House School, they will be required to complete a Garda Vetting Application Form **before** they commence employment.

Management will ensure that the identity of the applicant is confirmed against an original (not a photocopy) official documentation (such as a driving licence or passport), which includes the applicant's name, address, date of birth and a photograph. This should be compared with their written application.

Tusla-The Child and Family Agency inspection standards require Garda Vetting forms to be held on site by childcare providers otherwise the school will be deemed non-compliant under Childcare Regulations and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

Delay in Obtaining Garda Vetting

Ardtona House School will follow and respect the Garda Vetting Procedures and will follow the advice and guidance of the NVB and Tusla-The Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspector or any requirements that are compulsory under legislation. Garda Vetting is not transferable from one school to another.

Students

All students must be Garda Vetted. Students will be required to complete a Garda Vetting Application Form before they commence their placement at Ardtona House School. Students are required to complete Garda Vetting Application Forms in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Vetting Bureau. Garda Vetting Forms will be held on site and are not transferable to other schools or organisations.

Transition Year Students

If Ardtona House School takes on a transition year student or student under 18 years of age their parent/guardian will be required to complete and sign a form declaring that there are no convictions against the transition year student. Ardtona House School will obtain 2 validated references for all transition year students. A transition year student should never be left alone with any child in the school. They must be

accompanied at all times by a teacher. Garda Vetting will be required, however, for all transition students over 18 years.

Employees Who Have Lived Outside of Ireland

For persons who have lived/worked outside of the state for periods of time, a Garda Vetting Form should be completed listing the addresses both in Ireland and other countries that the person has resided in. Additionally, the person is required to provide an original Police Vetting Certificate/s from the country / countries that they have lived / worked in. This applies to international applicants as well as Irish applicants who have resided / worked abroad. Employers should take reasonable steps to verify Police vetting from other countries and these attempts should be recorded on the personnel file.

The Garda Vetting form for completion will be supplied by Barnardos. Only completed Garda vetting Forms returned and finalised by the NVB should be stored.

Guidelines for completing Garda vetting application forms

When completing this form, please note the following:

- Use a ball point pen
- Writing must be clear and legible, please use BLOCK CAPITALS
- If you make a mistake, put a line through it and re-write it
- Tippex or correction fluid should not be used. If necessary, use a fresh form
- Please note the detail in the declaration carefully

It is imperative that the Garda Vetting Form is fully and correctly completed. Failure to do so will result in a delay of appointment. This will be forwarded to Garda Headquarters. N.B. Forms stamped by Local Garda Station or forms forwarded by candidates personally to the NVB WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

See Appendix A Tips for Completing the Garda Vetting Form

The report that comes back from the NVB may show:

1. No previous convictions against the named applicant whose details were supplied.

OR

2. Details of convictions that appear on Garda records. These are based on the information supplied on the application for Garda vetting, however they cannot be positively confirmed by the Gardaí as fingerprints have not been supplied. These details must be verified with the applicant before any decision is made.

OR

3. Prosecutions successful or not, pending or completed.

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There is also the option of 'possible matches' where almost all the applicant's details match but there is some difference, such as the address or date of birth. Again, these details must be verified with the applicant before any decision is made.

Dealing with Disclosures

When a disclosure is returned from the NVB, Barnardos, will make contact with Ardtona House School Principal.

When information is returned indicating a prosecution or possible match, it is recommended that a Garda vetting review meeting is held with the applicant. This has two purposes:

1. To verify that the applicant is the person about whom the disclosure of convictions has been made. The information returned by the Gardaí may apply to the applicant and should be verified with the applicant before any decision is made.
2. To provide an opportunity for the employer and the applicant to discuss the disclosure from Garda vetting.

If the applicant disputes the information returned by the NVB, the onus is on the applicant to contact the Gardaí to resolve the matter.

The Principal may also convene a meeting together with a senior teacher/Director or another appropriate personnel such as a Development Worker from the CCC or a Consultant from an organisation with expertise in this field if required. The meeting will be convened to discuss the disclosure from the NVB in relation to the (prospective) employee and to decide what action is required. Some points to consider are:

- Has the employee already indicated to Ardtona House School what may be disclosed by the NVB.
- Does the employee disclosure 'match' the NVB disclosure?
- Where the employee has not indicated to Ardtona House School what the NVB has disclosed then management need to use the risk assessment below. This approach must consider the risk in terms of the individual, the offence and the purpose of the job.
- Management may speak to the employee in relation to this matter before making a final decision.
- Management should record their decision and inform the (prospective) employee of Ardtona House School of their decision.

Risk Assessment

Risk will be assessed in relation to the individual in terms of the risk due to the disclosed offence. In some cases the relationship between the offence and the position the individual has applied for will be clear enough to take a decision as to whether or not the individual is suitable for employment with Ardtona House School.

Points to consider are:

- Offences concerned with larceny, fraud and theft are crimes of deception and may be a behavioural indicator.
- Child Protection or related offences.
- Breaches in trust e.g. fraud.
- Offences against property e.g. arson, armed robbery.
- Drug related charges/convictions (particularly possession for sale or supply).
- Offences against the person e.g. assault, harassment, coercion.
- Offences against the state.

The risk will be assessed by the Principal.

Assessment of the risk of the employee together with the offence

- In carrying out this assessment, the following factors in addition to other relevant case specific concerns should be considered and documented in support of the recommendation to either stay on the current work assignment or transfer to a more suitable one.
- The seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of the children.
- The length of time since the offence was occurred.
- The age of the applicant at the time.
- Whether the offence was a 'one off' or part of a history of offending.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making re-offending less likely.
- The degree of remorse or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change.
- The sentence imposed in relation to the offence.
- Whether the applicant has undertaken any kind of rehabilitation relating to the offence they committed e.g. anger management or drug treatment programme.
- Work history since the offence.
- Protecting the employee from situations that might cause difficulty e.g. allegations against them etc.

The risk assessment and the decision to employ or not to employ should be carried out by those nominated as outlined above.

Data Collected through Garda Vetting

Ardtona House School will conform to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 in relation to the storage and retention of records.

Storage of Data

The storage and security of Garda Vetting Forms is a very important consideration under the Data Protection Acts. Appropriate security measures will be taken by Ardtona House School against unauthorised access to this data.

A minimum standard of security will include the following measures:

- Access to the information should be restricted to authorised teachers on a “need-to-know” basis. Access to Garda Vetting Forms should be restricted to a maximum of two individuals within the school.
- Access will also be restricted to external authorised personnel – e.g. the Pre-school Inspector.
- The forms 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 when out-of-date but only if a new vetting procedure has been completed.
- Premises will be secured when unoccupied.

Retention

Ardtona House School will retain a record of the decision to appoint an employee and the reasons for the decision as part of the overall recruitment records. In the event of a decision not to appoint an employee on the basis of a Garda vetting disclosure, records should be retained confidentially indefinitely.

Repeat Garda Vetting

The Garda Vetting procedure should be followed every three years for continuing employees and in line with any legislation.

Note

It is important to recognise the limitations of Garda/Police vetting, which can only alert an employer to criminal convictions. Research indicates that very few child abusers receive criminal convictions. Garda vetting will be used as part of the overall safe recruitment practices of Ardtona House School and is one component of the

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recruitment decision. The Management reserves the right to use their own judgement about whether a person is suitable for a post at Ardtona House School.

Appendix A Tips for completing the Garda Vetting Form

1. **Surname:** Insert your current surname
2. **Previous name:** Insert your previous name here (i.e. maiden name (if applicable))
3. **Forename:** Insert your forename / Christian name
4. **Alias:** If you are known by any name other than that / those on your birth certificate please insert here.
5. **P.P.S. No. – THIS IS NO LONGER REQUIRED and PLEASE DISREGARD THIS REMARK**
6. **Date of birth:** Insert your date of birth (dd/mm/yy)
7. **Place of birth:** Insert the name of the city or town that you were born in (e.g. Cork City)
8. **Have you ever changed your name?** If yes, tick 'yes' box, if no tick 'no' box.
If yes please state former name: Insert any previous surnames if applicable (e.g. in the event that you were married on more than one occasion or that you have changed your name by deed poll etc.)
9. **Please state all addresses from year of birth to present date:** it is very important that your current address and all previous addresses, including all addresses abroad, are provided. You must also insert the years that you resided at these addresses year from and year to. These will be checked and if there is any time unaccounted for, the form will be returned to you.
10. Please note that this clearance will only cover Irish and Northern Ireland addresses. If you have resided in any other countries, for a period of 6 months or more, it will be mandatory for you to furnish this department and Line Manager with a Police Clearance Cert from those countries stating that you have no CONVICTIONS recorded against you while residing at the overseas addresses.
11. **Have you ever been convicted of an offence in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere?** If no, tick 'no' box. If yes, tick 'yes' box and then please provide details of conviction(s), i.e. Date, Court, Offence, Court Outcome.
12. **Declaration:** Please make certain you fill in the position you are applying for in the section marked: **"I, the undersigned have applied to work as a..."** You must read this declaration carefully, sign and date it, and also print your name in block capitals underneath the signature. (BLOCK CAPITALS)

If a section of the form is not applicable to the candidate the candidate should enter 'N/A' or 'Not Applicable'.

All residences of the applicant within the island of Ireland and elsewhere must be disclosed (including UK, Europe and other locations).

RECRUITMENT and SELECTION POLICY

Regulation 8 and 14: Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006

Developed according to Tusla-The Child and Family Agency Procedure: Garda Vetting, Employee References [and recorded validations] & Qualifications.

Purpose

To ensure Ardtona House School follows best practice in the recruitment and selection of teachers and other employees.

Scope

This policy applies to all recruitment in Ardtona House School

Policy and Procedure

It is the policy of Ardtona House School to recruit and select the best candidate for any vacant position within our school. Our teachers are one of the key resources we have in achieving our aims and objectives of providing good quality care to the children in our school. Our primary concern is selecting the right candidate that will cherish the children in our care and help each one of them to reach their potential. (National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 11: Child Protection)

The following is how our school operates its recruitment process to ensure the best candidate is chosen for every position, with particular reference to the suitability to work with young children.

It is the policy of Ardtona House School to:

- Deal with all applications with courtesy and efficiency;
- Select candidates on the basis of their qualifications and/or experience for the vacancy concerned; and
- To give every person interviewed a fair and thorough hearing.

The organisation will not:

- Discriminate unfairly against potential applicants on grounds of gender, civil status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, race or membership of the Traveller community; or trade union membership / activity
- Discriminate unfairly against persons with a criminal record; or Make any false statements in recruitment literature or job advertisements.

Job Descriptions and Personal Specifications

Ardtona House School has updated job specifications and job descriptions for each position. These are available from the Principal.

Advertisement

The avenues we use to advertise positions will depend on the vacancy and the budgets available.

- Advertisements and the selection process will not discriminate on any of the nine grounds protected by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2008. These are gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the traveller community.
- It is essential that advertisements for all vacancies are impartial and objective.
- All employees on protective leave (such as maternity or parental leave) will be informed of each vacancy.
- All vacancies will be advertised both internally and externally.
- All vacancies will be advertised at a minimum through a classified ad in a local newspaper.
- Applicants will be asked to submit a CV and/or Application Form
- Every job applicant will be replied to without unreasonable delay.
- Potential applicants will be informed about the details and conditions of the position advertised.

Application Forms

Application forms will be freely available to any person who wishes to apply for a vacancy. All advertisements will include instructions on the application procedure and how interested parties may apply. All application forms will be checked thoroughly and any gaps or inconsistent information will be queried at the interview stage if the candidate is successful.

Interview

Our aim is to draw out as much relevant information from each candidate as possible to enable us to make an accurate assessment of their suitability for the job.

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After each interview is held, every candidate is assessed against the criteria set out in the job description, personal specification and their own qualifications. The interview sheet is then signed off by the interviewers.

Not all applicants will be called for interview. Ardtona House School aims to ensure an interview process that is free from discrimination. A gender-balanced interview panel will be provided where possible, but this may not always be feasible. The selection of persons who sit on the interview panel is at the discretion of the Management. All questions posed to the candidates will be consistent and will relate directly to the person's ability to do the job.

Candidates will be scored according to a recruitment matrix that has been designed to reflect the essential and desired criteria in the person specification. Fair and proper procedures will be followed. The reasons for non-selection will be identified.

Records of all applications, screening criteria and interview notes will be kept for a minimum period of 12 months by the Management, before being discarded.

Feedback will be given to unsuccessful internal candidates to support them in their future development.

Selection and Reference Checking

- Candidates may be requested to attend a pre-employment medical with a doctor and complete a Health Declaration
- Ardtona House School will also validate any necessary documentation relating to visas and work permits, where applicable.
- Candidates will be required to sign and declare that the information they have provided is true.
- Candidates will be required to provide details of two previous employers for reference-checking. Successful candidates will have their references checked before an offer of employment is made. References will be checked by telephone and in writing to verify the candidate's identity and to check their employment history, qualifications, experience and suitability for the role. References should be recent, relevant to the post and should not be provided by family members. References will be held on the employees personnel file.
- The identity of the applicant will be confirmed against an original (not a photocopy) official document (such as a driving licence or passport), which includes the applicant's name, address, date of birth and a photograph. This should be compared with the written application.

Garda Vetting

In accordance with the Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2006 we will ensure that all teachers are Garda vetted through Barnardos.

An 'applicant' teachers / relief worker / student / volunteer who want to work either on a paid or voluntary basis who has been Garda vetted but who has not any Police Vetting Certificates for the time that they have lived/worked outside of Ireland can NOT start to work in Ardtona House School.

The regulation [8(2)(d)]clearly states '*A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure appropriate vetting of all teachers, students and volunteers who have access to a child*' 'in circumstances where Garda vetting is not available for teachers, students and volunteers who have lived outside the jurisdiction, by ensuring that these persons provide the necessary police vetting from other police authorities'

Regulations and best practice from a child protection perspective require that schools complete vetting prior to any person being appointed or being allowed access to children. Allowing someone to start work before Garda vetting has been received is regarded as non-compliant under the Childcare Regulations.

Tusla-The Child and Family Agency inspection standards require Garda Vetting forms to be held on site by childcare providers to ensure the school is compliant under childcare regulations and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

For students/employees/volunteers aged between 16 to 18 years, the guidance from Tusla-The Child and Family Agency is they should be subject to Garda vetting only when they have substantial unsupervised access to children. A Garda vetting parental consent form must be signed in relation to applicants in the 16 to 18 age bracket.

Ardtona House School policy is that Garda vetting will be completed at three year intervals.

Probation

Once all the pre-employment assessments have been completed, a written offer of employment will be extended to the successful candidate, with full details of his or her conditions of employment. It is company policy that all such offers will include a probationary period, of one school year (nine months) and not longer than eleven months even when the successful candidate has been previously employed within the organisation. Reviews will be carried out throughout the probation period and in particular mid-way and at the end of the probation period. This gives Ardtona House School an opportunity to assess the suitability of a new worker to work with children and to implement the organisation's policies on safe practices.

Data Protection

Ardtona House School will comply with Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 including:

- Obtaining and processing information fairly.
- Keeping it for explicit lawful purposes.
- Using it and disclosing it only in ways compatible with those purposes.
- Keeping it safe and secure.
- Retaining it for no longer than is necessary for that purpose.
- Giving a person a copy of his or her personal data on request.

Employment/Personnel Files

Legislation requires that we keep certain records on our employees. It is our policy to keep the following records for each employee:

- C.V. and completed Application Form
- Copy of Advertisement
- Job Description
- Person/Job Specification (selection criteria)
- Questions for Interview
- Proof of identity (passport, driving license)
- Score Sheet & Interview Notes
- Medical Results
- Two validated References (Verbal and Written)
- Processed Garda Vetting Form
- Copies of letters sent to the candidate
- Contract signed by employee and employer
- Confirmation of Hire Form
- Sign Off sheet on all policies and Procedures
- Copies of validated Qualifications
- Completed Induction Form
- Letter confirming successful probation completed
- Training Record (individual)
- Copies of any other correspondence with the employee during the tenure of their employment

Forms

Application Form

Sample Reference Check Questionnaire

Health Declaration

Probation Review Form

EMPLOYEE TRAINING/QUALIFICATIONS and CPD

Regulation 8 and 14: Child Care (Pre-School) Services Regulations 2006

Developed according to Tusla-The Child and Family Agency Procedure: Garda Vetting, Employee References [and recorded validations] & Qualifications

Principle

Ardtona House School is committed to providing excellent service to all our children. We are also committed to training and developing of teachers in order to meet and exceed our customers' expectations.

Statement of Intent

Teachers are expected to engage in ongoing education & training programmes and adhere to the Child Care (Pre-School) Services Regulations 2006. All teachers are expected to hold qualifications required by law or required by any funding scheme (e.g. ECCE Free Pre-school Year)

Policy

Ardtona House School expects Teachers to have the following minimum qualifications:

Principals/Managers/Supervisors: (Fetac Level 6: Manual Handling: First Aid: Child Protection: Fire Safety: Continuous Professional Development)

Employees Working Directly with Children (Team Leaders/Teachers) (Fetac Level 5: Manual Handling: First Aid: Child Protection: Fire Safety: Continuous Professional Development)

All qualifications will be validated. Employees are expected to submit original copies of qualifications for validation. Records are kept

Ardtona House School defines Training and Development as follows:

Training is the process through which new skills knowledge and behaviour can be acquired and existing skills, knowledge and behaviour can be developed to enable individual employees to work to their full potential and provide maximum benefit to the organisation:

Induction Training

Every employee will be provided with an induction training programme when they commence work to ensure they are fully trained in the first number of months of work. The Induction will be recorded on the appropriate form. *See Induction Record Form*

On the Job Training

Training is organised for each employee or groups of employees to fulfill identified training needs in their current positions. This enables the employees to significantly improve their effectiveness and performance in their current positions.

Practice Reviews

Management of Ardtona House School through observation, consultation and meetings will identify the training needs of the team and ensure any weaknesses in performance are addressed and remedied by an appropriate action.

See *Practice Review Form*. This form will be used by management to identify on-the-job training needs based on observation of practice in the rooms.

These will be addressed by:

- One to one supervision
- Staff meetings
- Training
- Support Sessions

All meetings (group and individual) will be recorded. All instruction /direction and training of individual employees will be recorded on the appropriate Training Record Form and placed on the individual employees file.

All minutes of staff meetings are filed in the Staff Meetings Minutes File

People Development Training

Training is organised in regard to career development. The training may not be directly relevant to an employee's current position but is likely to develop in the medium-long-term future. This training is validated by Management.

All training will be recorded on the employees individual training record

Legislative Responsibilities

Training is organised as required by legislation (Manual Handling, First Aid, Fire Safety etc...)

As a school, our commitment to each employee is to:

- Create an environment where training and development is genuinely valued.
- Put in place processes to assist in conducting training and development activities, and to monitor the effectiveness of these processes.
- Invest in training and development.

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- Plan and review training and development activities at all levels in the organization.
- Share with the employees the progress of their training and development activities, what has worked, the business benefits, where improvements are needed and so on.
- Continue to improve and develop our training resources so that they actively support the employees as well as the business.

Ardtona House School wants each employee to:

- Take responsibility for their own training and development.
- Recognise and meet their full potential.
- Perceive training and development as a continuous process.
- Understand that development means more than just attending training courses.
- Realise the importance of ensuring that training and development is aligned with the needs of the business

Ardtona House School recognises that the continuous development of the knowledge and skills of all employees is key to the success of the business. Therefore all employees regardless of age, disability, gender, marital or family status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or a member of a travelling community will be given the opportunity and will be expected to undertake training in any field of learning which is pertinent to the achievement of corporate and operational goals.

Employees must attend training programmes. It is also assumed that teachers would participate in a number external training programmes each year as part of their Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Forms

Induction Training Checklist

Practice Review

Individual Training Record

Employee Qualifications and Experience

STUDENTS and VOLUNTEERS

Regulation 8 and 14: Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006

Developed according to Tusla-The Child and Family Agency Procedure: Garda Vetting, Employee References [and recorded validations] & Qualifications

Purpose

Ardtona House School will offer students a variety of learning opportunities in the area of early education. (Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 Part II 8 Management & Staffing) (Siolta Standard 9: Health & Welfare, Siolta Standard 16: Community Involvement) (National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 11: Child Protection)

Policy

- All volunteers and students will be over the age of sixteen (with the exception of transition year students).
- Validated References and Garda vetting will be obtained for all students by Ardtona House School.
- The duration and timing of placement will be agreed in advance of the placement with the Principal.
- Students/volunteers will be required to read all policies and procedures of the school as part of their induction.
- Students/volunteers will be required to 'sign-off' that they have read and understood the policies and procedures of the school.
- Students/volunteers will not work unsupervised with either individuals or groups of children.
- The Principal will be responsible for students.
- Students/volunteers should have a clear defined role, i.e. duties and responsibilities of the student and will sign a declaration. (Student Agreement Form Volunteer agreement Form)
- Students/volunteers will not deal with parents.
- Ardtona House School is aware of their responsibility to provide a 'real and rich' learning environment for the student.

Prior to Placement of Students

- Ardtona House School will ensure that there are appropriate links with colleges.
- Colleges should, in writing, introduce the student, giving the school a profile of the student, highlighting any additional needs and an outline of the course content.
- All students must attend an interview with the Principal and the placement supervisor from school or college as well.
- Ardtona House School will ensure that they receive confirmation (copy of insurance certificate) from the college confirming that students are insured by the college while on placement.
- All students must attend an induction session to enable them to develop an awareness of the school.
- A file will be maintained on all students containing such information pertaining to the college placement, college, tutor etc.

During Placement

- The Principal is responsible for assessing the training needs of students on placement and ensuring that they are given the opportunities to build on existing skills and to develop new skills.
- The Principal will monitor the student's progress and liaise with the student's assessor at regular intervals throughout the period of the placement.
- Students must adhere to the school's policies and procedures.
- Students who are required to conduct child studies or work with children must obtain written permission from the parents of that child. Parents will have access to any written study. Students will consult with the Principal on all written records.

While on placement Ardtona House School will support students by:

- Providing ongoing support to make the placement as useful and beneficial as possible for students.
- Providing the information and support necessary for students to carry out any written assignments and prepare for assessment visits by the placement supervisor.

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Dress Code

- Dress must be neat, clean and tidy and it must be non-revealing.
- Any tattoos should not be on view.
- Hair should be clean, washed, neat and tied back at all times.
- Nails should be short and clean at all times. Painted nails are not considered appropriate for a childcare setting.
- Comfortable shoes should be worn at all times. High-heels, toe-less sandals (flip flops) or backless shoes should be avoided in light of the dangers these can present to teachers and children.
- Chewing gum is not permitted.
- Students/volunteers may be requested to wear attire displaying Ardtona House School logo, for instance when they are on outings on behalf of Ardtona House School.

Confidentiality

Working as a student/volunteer within the school may on occasion give rise to students being aware of confidential information in relation to children and families attending the school.

- Students/Volunteers **must not** disclose or permit to be disclosed any information which concerns any child/children and/or families to any other person or agency/organisation unless you are required to do so in the context of child protection procedures or as required under legislation.
- Students/Volunteers should not share any information about other students or teachers with a third party.
- Students/Volunteers will be advised as to the setting of boundaries between the working relationship and friendship with parents. Do not engage them in unnecessary conversations of a personal nature. Conversations should be restricted to greetings. Parents requesting information from students should be directed to the senior teacher in the room. If parents have an issue/complaint they should be referred immediately to the Principal.
- Students/Volunteers may not use social networking sites to befriend parents whose children attend Ardtona House School or to exchange any information about the school or children attending the school.

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Volunteers

- The hours that volunteers work will be arranged according to the hours the volunteer is available and the needs of the school in consultation with the Principal. There will be no minimum or maximum hours or any guarantee of voluntary work.
- Working as a Volunteer in Ardtona House School does not preclude you from employment elsewhere.
- All voluntary work is unpaid. Volunteers may be reimbursed for agreed expenses in consultation with the Principal.
- Volunteers should be present in the school and ready to commence their voluntary work at the arranged and agreed times. Volunteers unable to attend at the arranged and agreed times should inform the Principal by telephone as soon as possible in advance.

Forms

Student Volunteer 'Sign Off'

Student Agreement

Volunteer Agreement

INFORMATION

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PRE-SCHOOLS

These Standards have been developed to encourage providers to deliver a higher level of quality than is strictly required under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006. Tusla-The Child and Family Agency will determine the precise manner in which these Standards will be taken into account in the course of pre-school inspections. The Standards and the associated criteria will be kept under review, with a view to amending, adding to or subtracting from the document if experience demonstrates this to be necessary or appropriate. The outcomes for the standards are as follows:

Standard 1: Information

Parents or guardians have sufficient information in order to make an informed choice about the childcare service that they require.

Standard 2: Contract

Parents or guardians have a written contract with the service provider that has been agreed by both parties.

Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians

Parents or guardians are kept fully informed and involved as partners in their children's activities, achievements and progress.

Standard 4: Records

A register containing particulars of each child attending the service, as well as a full range of records containing particulars relating to the service, is maintained in accordance with the Regulations.

Standard 5: Organisation and Management

Parents or guardians and children benefit from a well-organised and well-planned service.

Standard 6: Evaluation

An on-going system of reflection and evaluation is in place to continually enhance outcomes for children.

Standard 7: Complaints

Parents or guardians are satisfied that their complaints will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon.

Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning

Children have the opportunity to engage in a range of activities and experiences that promote their learning and well-being and contribute to the Whole Child Perspective,

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which places the child at the centre and recognises that the child is an active participant in his or her development.

Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being

Each child is secure, happy and comfortable with his or her carers and in the environment.

Standard 10: Behaviour

Children receive positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and are supported in finding positive solutions to problems.

Standard 11: Child Protection

Children are safely cared for within the service. Any concerns coming to the attention of the service which relate to the safety and welfare of those children, either within or outside the service, are responded to in accordance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Standard 12: Health Care

The health care needs of each child are identified and addressed as appropriate.

Standard 13: Food and Drink

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements. Meal times are social occasions where children are relaxed and comfortable.

Standard 14: Sleep

Each individual child's need for sleep or rest is facilitated.

Standard 15: Children with Disabilities

The welfare and development of children with disabilities who are attending the service is promoted in partnership with the parents or guardians and other relevant parties.

Standard 16: Equal Opportunities

All children attending the service are treated with equal concern and respect.

Standard 17: Premises

The premises in which the facility is located are of sound and stable structure, are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose, and are welcoming to children and their families.

Standard 18: Facilities

The facilities provided ensure the welfare and comfort of both children and staff.

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Standard 19: Equipment and Materials

Children have access to furniture, equipment and toys that are developmentally appropriate, safe, and suitable for their needs.

Standard 20: Safety

Children have their needs met in a safe environment.

For further information and the full criteria for each standard go to
www.dohc.ie/publications/national_standards_preschool2010.html

SÍOLTA, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

STANDARDS

Standard 1: Rights of the Child

Ensuring that each child's rights are met requires that she/he is enabled to exercise choice and to use initiative as an active participant and partner in her/his own development and learning.

Standard 2: Environments

Enriching environments, both indoor and outdoor (including materials and equipment) are well maintained, safe, available, accessible, adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and offer a variety of challenging and stimulating experiences.

Standard 3: Parents and Families

Valuing and involving parents and families requires a proactive partnership approach evidenced by a range of clearly stated, accessible and implemented processes, policies and procedures.

Standard 4: Consultation

Ensuring inclusive decision-making requires consultation that promotes participation and seeks out, listens to and acts upon the views and opinions of children, parents and staff, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

Standard 5: Interactions

Fostering constructive interactions (child/child, child/adult and adult/adult) requires explicit policies, procedures and practice that emphasise the value of process and are based on mutual respect, equal partnership and sensitivity.

Standard 6: Play

Promoting play requires that each child has ample time to engage in freely available and accessible, developmentally appropriate and well-resourced opportunities for exploration, creativity and 'meaning making' in the company of other children, with participating and supportive adults and alone, where appropriate.

Standard 7: Curriculum

Encouraging each child's holistic development and learning requires the implementation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme.

Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation

Enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the setting requires cycles of observation, planning, action and evaluation, undertaken on a regular basis.

Standard 9: Health and Welfare

Promoting the health and welfare of the child requires protection from harm, provision of nutritious food, appropriate opportunities for rest, and secure relationships characterised by trust and respect.

Standard 10: Organisation

Organising and managing resources effectively requires an agreed written philosophy, supported by clearly communicated policies and procedures to guide and determine practice.

Standard 11: Professional Practice

Practising in a professional manner requires that individuals have skills, knowledge, values and attitudes appropriate to their role and responsibility within the setting. In addition, it requires regular reflection upon practice and engagement in supported, ongoing professional development.

Standard 12: Communication

Communicating effectively in the best interests of the child requires policies, procedures and actions that promote the proactive sharing of knowledge and information among appropriate stakeholders, with respect and confidentiality.

Standard 13: Transitions

Ensuring continuity of experiences for children requires policies, procedures and practice that promote sensitive management of transitions, consistency in key relationships, liaison within and between settings, the keeping and transfer of relevant information (with parental consent), and the close involvement of parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.

Standard 14: Identity and Belonging

Promoting positive identities and a strong sense of belonging requires clearly defined policies, procedures and practice that empower every child and adult to develop a confident self- and group identity, and to have a positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others.

Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation

Being compliant requires that all relevant regulations and legislative requirements are met or exceeded.

Standard 16: Community Involvement

Promoting community involvement requires the establishment of networks and connections evidenced by policies, procedures and actions which extend and support all adult's and children's engagement with the wider community.

For further information see www.siolta.ie

REVIEW OF POLICIES

These policies are a working document and will be reviewed regularly and in line with changes in Legislation, Regulations, National Standards and Good Practice.

The following comments are for use at the next review

[illegible]